

**KAUTILYA'S ARTHASHASTRA:
A TIMELESS GRAND STRATEGY**

BY

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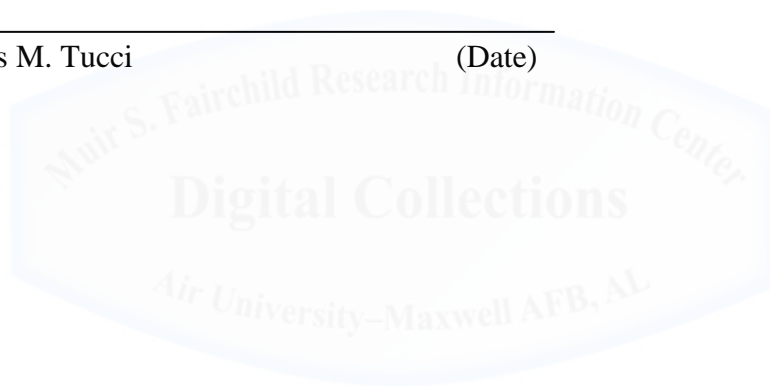
The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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DISCLAIMER

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ABSTRACT

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* provides an insight into the ancient Indian anthology of political wisdom, theory, and the art of statecraft. It is one of the major political and strategic treatises that constitute a collection of timeless concepts. The importance and relevance of such strategies and concepts could be enriching to the contemporary world. Some of the strategies could be gainfully employed to achieve long-term benefits and resolve some of the key issues affecting numerous countries today.

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* provides guidance to a wise king to further the national interests of the state that center on issues of *security*, *wealth*, and *prestige*. Throughout the *Arthashastra*, three fundamental objectives flow from one to the other: good governance (promotion of the welfare of the subjects) leads to good economy (acquisition of wealth) that, in turn, allows for the expansion of territory. The concept of diplomacy is primarily to achieve world conquest and world consolidation. Therefore, six measures of foreign policy are recommended that assist the leader in managing the state through transition from a state of decline to one of stabilization, and from there to achieve progress or advancement. The policy to be employed depends on the relative power, strategic environment, and dynamics of the political situation. The aim of the policy is increase in power of the state at the expense of the enemy. As such, the *Arthashastra* has been identified as the first comprehensive statement of political realism. Kautilya defines war as *an* expression of the foreign policy of a state. He provides guidance to a king to employ the elements of national power to achieve a state of continuing advantage. Kautilya provides a *grand strategy*.

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Introduction

Arthashastra is the masterwork of India's greatest statesman-philosopher, Kautilya. Composed in the late fourth century BCE, *Arthashastra* ranks alongside Sun Tzu's *Art of War* and Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* as one of the timeless classics of the ancient arts of war and governance. Like *Art of War*, the origins of *Arthashastra* are somewhat shrouded in mystery. It was lost sometime after the fall of the Gupta dynasty (ca. 550 CE), reappearing in 1904 after more than 1400 years of obscurity. Published in 1909, the first English translation was carried out in 1915 followed by German, Russian, and other translations.¹ And, as is the case with many ancient works, its authorship has been disputed. Kautilya is often referred to as Chanakya, probably his birth name and generally understood to be the same person, and occasionally as Vishnugupta. In *Arthashastra*, there is much criticism of the opinions of earlier teachers, followed by Kautilya's own opinion.² Still, the preponderance of academic opinion is that Kautilya (or Chanakya) is the author of *Arthashastra* (clearly stated in the first chapter),³ and that it was composed during the reign of the first Maurya king, Chandragupta Maurya (321-297 BCE).⁴ A verse in the fifteenth chapter enumerates that the "science (*shastra*) was composed by that person who, in resentment, rescued the earth from the Nanda Kings," a tale briefly recounted below.⁵

¹ Roger Boesche, *The first great Political realist: Kautilya and his Arthashastra* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 8.

² R.P.Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 3 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965), 60.

³ The Kautiliya *Arthashastra*, part 1 by R.P.Kangle is a reproduction of the original text in Sanskrit language (primary source). The Kautiliya *Arthashastra*, part 2 by R.P.Kangle is an English translation. These two books formed the basis of the research. The Kautiliya *Arthashastra* Book 1, Chapter 1 and verse 19 in Sanskrit language describes Kautilya as the author of *Arthashastra*. See R.P.Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965), 5.

⁴ Professors J.F. Fleet, H. Jacobi, J.J. Meyer, B. Breloer and F.W. Thomas describe Kautilya as having destroyed the power of the Nanda kings and placed Chandragupta Maurya on the throne of Magadha in 321 BCE. They assert Kautilya wrote *Arthashastra* during Chandragupta's reign, though this has been disputed by professors J. Jolly, M. Winternitz, A.B. Keith and O. Stern. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 3, 59.

⁵ The Kautiliya *Arthashastra* Book 15, Chapter 1 and verse 73 in Sanskrit language re-emphasizes that Kautilya, the destroyer of Nanda Kingdom is the author of *Arthashastra*. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 516.

The reemergence of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was no small event. His reputation as a kingmaker was well known, but the precise substance of his thought had been missing. When *Arthashastra* came out in the early twentieth century, it was a revelation. Gerard Chaliand states "Kautilya's *Arthashastra* must be regarded as one of the major political and strategic treatises of the ancient world."⁶ Its relentless instruction in the practice of state-making and state-keeping in an era of multi-polar competition led to immediate comparisons with some of the West's most notorious political tracts. "Truly radical 'Machiavellianism,' in the popular sense of that word," Max Weber stated flatly, "is classically expressed in Indian literature in the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya (written long before the birth of Christ, ostensibly in the time of Chandragupta Maurya); compared to it, Machiavelli's 'The Prince' is harmless."⁷ Comparisons to the harsher variants of realism were perhaps inevitable, though as will be shown below, perhaps premature if not entirely misplaced. Dr. Roger Boesche, for example, called Kautilya "the first great political realist of the World."⁸ In an attempt to place it along a continuum of human socio-political thought, Heinrich Zimmer proclaimed *Arthashastra* the first complete anthology of the "timeless laws of politics, economy, diplomacy, and war."⁹

What sets *Arthashastra* apart are its logical rigor and precisely sequenced roles and actions for the wise ruler. Kautilya instructed the king in his duties and no doubt intended his work to be a guide for the future. As such, *Arthashastra* is defined by Dr. A.L. Basham as a "treatise on polity," an encompassing enough view but not enough to separate it from other popular guides.¹⁰ Its unique exactness is better described by Dr. R.P. Kangle as the "*science* of politics."¹¹ It has also been noted that *Arthashastra* may be the world's first significant tract on the nature of social and political economics—or macroeconomics. Accordingly, Dr. D.D. Kosambi refers to

⁶ Gerard Chaliand, *The Art of War in World History: From Antiquity to the Nuclear Age* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1994), 287.

⁷ Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *Selections in Translation*, ed. W. G. Runciman, trans. Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 220.

⁸ Boesche, *The first great political realist*, 4.

⁹ Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 36.

¹⁰ A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1969), 51.

¹¹ Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 3, 2.

Arthashastra as a “science of material gain.”¹² Dr. R. Boesche translates *Arthashastra* as a “science of political economy.”¹³

The consensus reached by these scholars is clear. The *Arthashastra* is a work of profound historical significance: one that provides insights to the clarity of thought of one of the ancient period’s most successful political philosophers. It may also prove an useful tool for discussions of the current context of multi-state diplomacy. Accordingly, for purposes of this discussion, I define *Arthashastra* as an *art and science of governance, diplomacy, and war*.

Arthashastra is a science to the extent that it provides a practical manual for the means and manner of territorial acquisition and, once acquired, proper maintenance and protection of that territory.¹⁴ It is an art to the extent that the practitioner must rely on experience and wisdom, informed by the general rules and guidelines Kautilya provides, for application in specific contexts. In this way, *Arthashastra* provides a strategy for governments to protect their territories, gain the territories of others, and maintain all these territories properly and well. It encompasses both the administration and foreign policy of the state. It is the art and science of statecraft; of politics and administration.¹⁵

¹² D.D.Koshambi, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1964), 142.

¹³ Boesche, *The first great political realist*, 30.

¹⁴ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 15, Chapter 1 and verse 1 and 2 in Sanskrit language briefly explains the essence of *Arthashastra*. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 512.

¹⁵ Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 3, 2.

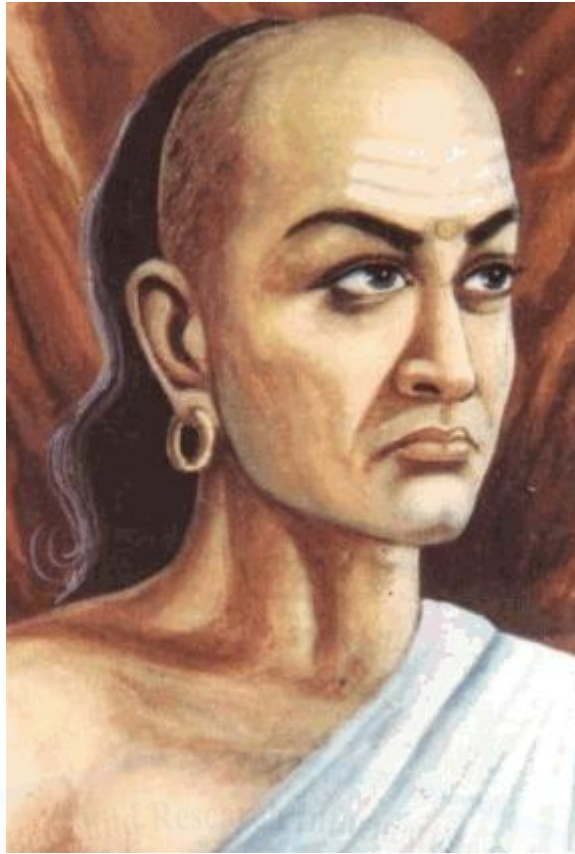


Figure 1: Portrait of Kautilya

Source: [http:// WWW.kamat.com](http://WWW.kamat.com) (accessed 20 Nov 2010)

Kautilya in His Time

The fourth century BCE was a tumultuous period in the Indian sub continent. Through most of it, India comprised a multitude of relatively prosperous warring kingdoms. In an attempt to take advantage of the fractured political system and assert full control over the entire civilized world, Alexander the Great invaded in 326 BCE. The task was too difficult; his reach finally exceeding his grasp. Following perhaps the only strategic miscalculation of his young life, Alexander was forced to retreat, by the rebellion of his army in the Indian subcontinent, and the glorious expansion of the Greek empire reached an abrupt end. In his wake, a powerful new Indian kingdom emerged. It expanded rapidly towards Persia to include present day Pakistan and Afghanistan and covered most parts of India to Bengal in the East. With Chandragupta Maurya as emperor and the enigmatic Kautilya as his advisor, the Mauryan Empire was established.

According to legend, Kautilya, a Brahmin by birth, was the son of a teacher at the prestigious university at Taxila (near Rawalpindi in modern Pakistan).¹⁶ He was a gifted student and became renowned for acumen when still a boy, and became a professor at the university at a very young age. Interested in politics, he became convinced that India, beset with internal unrest, was ripe for a foreign invasion. He set out for Patliputra, the most powerful city of the Nanda kingdom, to counsel its rulers. As it turned out, Dhanananda, the ruler of Patliputra, was already using the threat of invasion to squeeze his subjects out of the last of their wealth, a situation that Kautilya found intolerable. Dhanananda accepted the advice of Kautilya for a time, but as it included public works and gifts to the poor that depleted his treasury, he tired of the famous scholar and insulted his honor by belittling him and removing him from his post without explanation. Kautilya cursed the king and vowed to destroy his kingdom.¹⁷

Following his humiliation, Kautilya wandered towards home in contemplation. He came across a young boy playing with his friends who exhibited the qualities of a born leader. He questioned the boy, Chandragupta, and found he was the deposed heir of a noble family that had been destroyed by the Nandas. This youth would be the vessel of his revenge. Kautilya took the boy to the university in Taxila and provided him with an education in science, arts, and military strategies.¹⁸

¹⁶ Much of the legend and history is drawn from “Chanakya-Niti, *Understanding Hinduism*, <http://www.hinduism.co.za/chanakya.htm>, accessed 15 April 2011.

¹⁷ Radha Kumud Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1966), 21.

¹⁸ Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times*, 16.

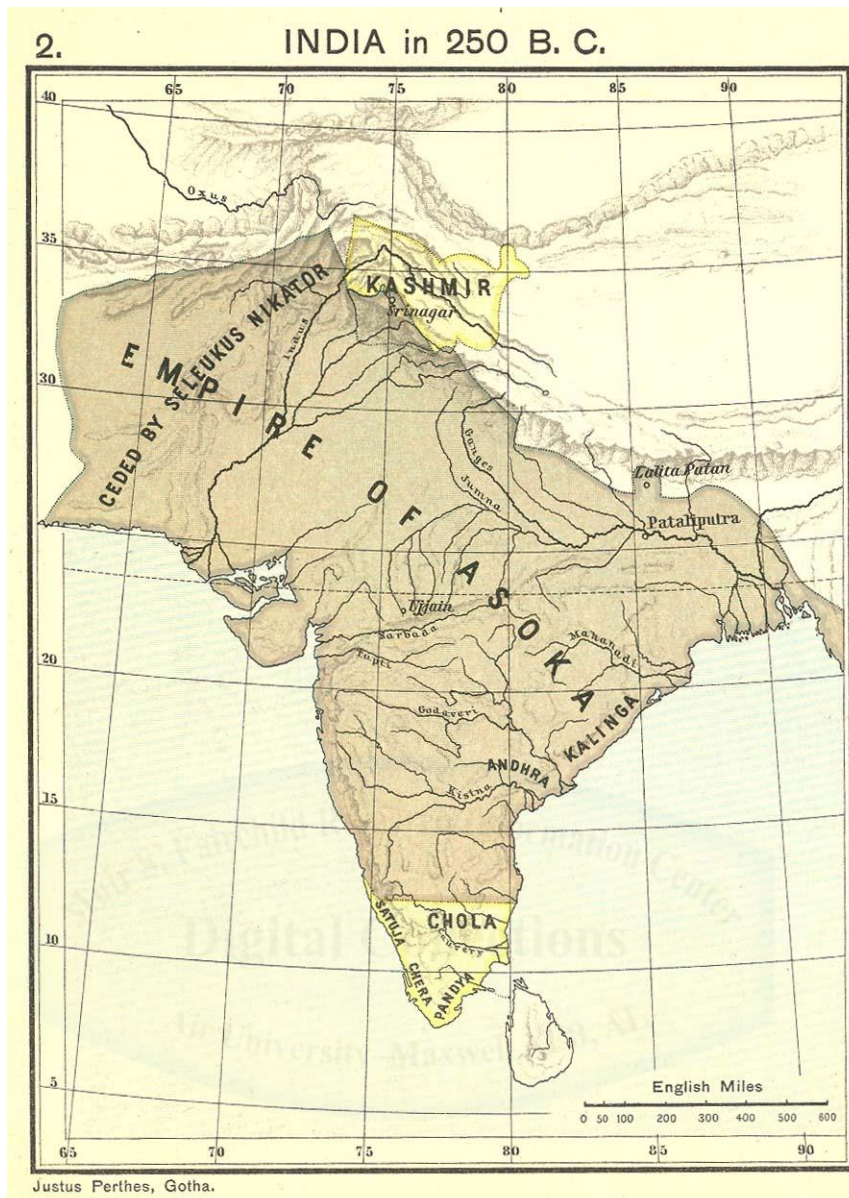


Figure 2: Mauryan Empire (323-198 BCE) extent under Ashoka (273-232 BCE)

Source: From "The Age of the Maurya's (323-198 BCE)," <http://www.mbatutes.com/the-age-of-mauryas-321-198-bc/> (accessed 2 May 2011)

The two became inseparable. Chandragupta was a fine military commander and the picture of Indian royalty, but Kautilya was the master strategist. In the wake of Alexander's retreat, they secured patrons and raised an army to attack the Nanda Empire at its stronghold of Patliputra, but were defeated. The story goes they came across a mother scolding a child for eating hot bread from the middle instead of the edges that were cooler. Learning from this experience, Chandragupta and Kautilya

attacked the outer areas of the Nanda kingdom and achieved success.¹⁹ In the process they gained allies, and after the death of Alexander in 323 BCE, Chandragupta and Kautilya commenced their campaigns against the Greek invaders. By 321 BCE, Chandragupta had conquered Punjab and Sindh from the Greeks and, by 305 BCE, had compelled Seleucus (Alexander's successor) into a treaty that ceded the territories of Afghanistan and Baluchistan.²⁰ Chandragupta married Seleucus' daughter.

The Mauryan Empire grew in strength and at its peak had a population of more than 50 million, extending from Persia to Bengal.²¹ Pliny, learning of the massive empire from Megasthenes, the ambassador from Seleucus to Chandragupta, wrote that Chandragupta's army comprised 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 8000 chariots, and 9000 elephants.²² Chandragupta's capital was Patliputra, at the time the largest city in the world, straddling the Ganges river for eight miles in length and a mile and half wide. It had 570 tower and 64 gates, all surrounded by a defensive moat 600 feet wide and 45 feet deep.²³ For comparison, Patliputra was about twice as large as Rome under emperor Marcus Aurelius.²⁴ India was united, and Kautilya was the undisputed genius of the strategy that lead to the foundation and growth of the empire. To solidify the state and ensure its beneficent continuation, Kautilya composed *Arthashastra* to provide guidance to a wise king, enabling him to defeat his enemies and rule correctly on behalf of the general good.²⁵

¹⁹ Romila Thapar, *A History of India* (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1996), 70.

²⁰ Purushottam Lal Bhargava, *Chandragupta Maurya: A Gem of Indian History* (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 1996), 38.

²¹ Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) 59.

²² Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 59.

²³ H.C.Raychaudhuri, "India in the Age of the Nandas," in *Age of the Nandas and Mauryas*, ed. K.A.Sastri (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996), 158.

²⁴ Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, *A History of India* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 1991), 60.

²⁵ Boesche, *The first great political realist*, 8.

Organization and Contents of *Arthashastra*

The primary theme of *Arthashastra* is ruling well. *Artha* is a word with many forms or meaning. For instance, it is used to denote material well being,²⁶ livelihood,²⁷ and economically productive activity.²⁸ At the level of the state, government plays an important role in ensuring the material well being of the nation and its people. Therefore, *Arthashastra* includes guidance on the productive enterprises, taxation, revenue collection, budget, and is in this manner the “scene of economics.”²⁹ The significance of successful economically-oriented political activities is critical to the state treasury (*Kosha*) or economy of the state. Therefore, Kautilya in *Arthashastra* enumerates the importance of maintaining the right balance between the welfare of the people and augmenting the resources of the state.³⁰ As a result, an efficient administration ensuring law and order and upholding the fabric of society is a prerequisite for successful governance of the state. Kautilya thus advocates that the ruler, to ensure protection of the state from external aggression (*raksha*), maintenance of law within the state (*palana*), and safeguarding the welfare of the people (*yogashema*), takes an active interest in economic affairs. Preceding the admonition of Machiavelli by nearly two millennia, that the state which fails to grow ultimately withers and dies,³¹ Kautilya insists that the prosperity of the state and its inhabitants cannot be maintained unless new territory is acquired by settlement of virgin lands, by alliance, or by conquest.³² In a political environment with many kings, being content with one’s own territory makes one vulnerable to the expansionist ambitions of the other kings. To deal with the aspirations of other kings, employment of numerous peaceful or hostile means (referred to as foreign policy, below) is advocated by Kautilya. Since conquest provided the primary means for acquisition (*labha*) of new

²⁶ Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 3, 2.

²⁷ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 15, Chapter 1 and verse 1 in Sanskrit language defines *Artha* as the source of livelihood. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 512.

²⁸ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 1, Chapter 1 and verse 1 explains *Artha* in Sanskrit language as economically productive activity. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 1.

²⁹ L.N. Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992), 14.

³⁰ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 1, Chapter 4 and verse 3 in Sanskrit language advises a ruler to be just in implementation of state policies. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 9.

³¹ Everett C. Dolman, *Astropolitik: Classical Geopolitics in the Space Age*, Cass Series--Strategy and History (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002), 32.

³² Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 15.

territory, preparing for, and waging war constituted an integral part of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. Understanding war as more than mere combat, as a complex and interconnected set of activities across layers of human interaction, Kautilya set down the guidelines of a complete governing system. Thus, *Arthashastra* is an art of governance that includes administration (law order and justice), economy (taxation, revenue, and expenditure), and foreign policy (defense and war).

It is important to note that Kautilyan society followed traditional Hindu form, and was comprised mainly of four classes and various sub-classes. The *Brahmins* were priests involved in sacred knowledge. *Kshatriyas* were warriors, incorporated into the military, for the protection of the country. *Vaishyas* were associated with agriculture, cattle rearing, and subsequently trade and commerce. *Shudras* were the backbone of the productive capacity of the country, serving as agriculturists, artisans, and craftsmen. Shudras constituted the labor community and also functioned as artists for entertainment of the public.³³ While Kautilya advocated the protection of class system, he regarded the *state as superior to religion*, also insisting that a large conquering army must include men who were Vaishyas and Shudras to augment the Kshatriyas. Kautilya promoted the state power, over the demands of class and religion.³⁴

“Artha is the sustenance or livelihood (vrtitih) of men; it means ‘the earth inhabited by men.’”³⁵ *Arthashastra* is thus an extension of *artha* to the highest levels of society; it is “the science which is the means of the acquisition and protection of the earth.”³⁶ In India, since time immemorial, *artha* has been considered one of three realms of human existence: *Dharma*, *Artha*, and *Kama*. These denote legal relations, political and economic relations, and individual and social relations.

Artha concerns the earth where people live and seek their individual material well being. *Arthashastra* is the science concerned with providing and extending

³³ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 1, Chapter 3 and verse 8 in Sanskrit language describes the occupations of *Shudras* as the laborers and artists. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 8.

³⁴ Boesche, *The first great political realist*, 30.

³⁵ Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 3, 1.

³⁶ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 15, Chapter 1 and verse 2 in Sanskrit language explains *Arthashastra* as the science which is the means of attainment and protection of territory for livelihood of men. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 512.

general well being on earth. Since state activity alone can make such general well being possible, the protection of earth (territory) and its acquisition—essential duties of proper state activity—is integral to the science. Accordingly, *Arthashastra* has a twofold aim: it provides guidance to the ruler to protect (*palana*) his territory and, secondly, it shows how territory should be acquired (*labha*). Therefore, *Arthashastra* is a science dealing with state affairs in the internal and external spheres; it is the science of statecraft or of politics, administration, and diplomacy.³⁷

Arthashastra comprises fifteen *adikaranas* or books. A verse in the first chapter states that the *Arthashastra* has 150 chapters, 180 *prakaranas* (sections devoted to a specific topic) and 6000 verses. The *Arthashastra* is predominantly written in prose of the *sutra* (maxim) form with 380 *shlokas* (verses). Book One involves the king, training of the king, appointment of ministers and officers of the state, safety and security. Book Two refers to the duties of various executive officers of the state and elaborates the role of state in agriculture, mining and leisure activities. Book Three deals with law and administration of justice and provides a code of law. Book Four concerns detection and suppression of crime, and control over merchants, artisans, torture and punishment. Book Five is a miscellaneous collection of topics including the salary scale of officials and advice to the chief minister on the ensuring continuity of rule on the demise of the ruling monarch. Book Six has two chapters; the first provides a theory of constituent elements of a state, and the second chapter pertains to foreign policy. Book Seven elaborates the *mandala* theory of the circle of states and the six methods of foreign policy that may be used in various situations. Throughout, the ultimate goal is set for the ruler—expansion of kingdom to ensure well being of the state.

Book Eight enumerates the *vyasanas* or calamities, shortcomings or weaknesses that may affect the functioning of various constituents of a state adversely. Book Nine concerns preparation for war that includes the kinds of troops to mobilize for an expedition, precautions to be adhered to, and dangers to be guarded against. Book Ten is about fighting an enemy and describes the main battle camp, types of battle arrays and different modes of fighting. Book Eleven describes how a *vijigishu* or conqueror should subjugate *samghas* or oligarchies governed by a group

³⁷ Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 3, 2.

of chiefs. Book Twelve shows how a weak king, when threatened by a stronger king, should frustrate the latter's design and ultimately overcome him. Book Thirteen concerns the conquest of an enemy's fortified capital by subterfuge or by fighting. It also describes how the conquered territories should be ruled. Book Fourteen enumerates the secret remedies and occult practices. Book Fifteen defines and illustrates the thirty two *tantrayuktis* or methods of treating a subject.

In brief, the *Arthashastra* is primarily a treatise on the governance of a state. It comprehensively deals with the necessary issues and functions connected with internal administration and foreign relations, and provides the ruler an education in the ways of attaining the overriding goal of expansion of his kingdom. It is not only wide-ranging, it is detailed in its practical guidance, yet not so binding as to instill rigidity in the face of changing conditions.

For example, according to Kautilya, a state has seven constituent elements: the ruler (or head of a state), the ministers, the urban and rural population, fortifications, the economic base, the military or martial capacity, and the ally (external constituent). Each is described and placed within a hierarchy (described in a circular *mandala* form in later chapters) of interaction, and then subjected to systematic scrutiny. Kautilya's theoretical analysis of the functioning of a state includes a breakdown of aspects of internal administration in terms of the six internal constituents of the states and analysis of the relations between states in terms of the theory of the circle of states.

Arthashastra has three distinct parts. The first part deals with administration; it describes the organization of the state and prescribes the duties and responsibilities of every key official, either for maintaining order or for collecting revenue. The second part relates to a code of law and justice; it covers both civil and criminal law and provides a penal code. The third part relates to foreign policies, the primary aim of which is acquisition of territory by conquest. The three parts correspond to the three objectives of the state; wealth (economy), justice (law and order), and growth (expansion of territory). A stable and prosperous state can only be secure if it has a just and efficient administration, one that sets the proper conditions for the accumulation of wealth and augmentation of territory.

Conclusion

It is not difficult to see how the Western mind perceives in the *Arthashastra* a harsh, even cruel, form of modern political realism. Kautilya does not flinch from the description of ruthless efficiency that must weigh heavily on the brow of the king, who must ensure the wealth and safety of his realm in a world filled with atavistic marauders and selfish social ne'er-do-wells. In his time, however, Kautilya was a celebrated humanist—a beloved teacher of moral good. His contemporaries held him in high esteem, because his political study began with, and was centered on, the primary goal of ruling or governing *well*. Throughout the *Arthashastra*, three fundamental objectives flow from one to the other: good governance (promotion of the welfare of the subjects) leads to good economy (acquisition of wealth) that, in turn, allows for the expansion of territory.³⁸ It is the provision of a *grand strategy* for the proper governance of a state. This grand strategy includes political, economic, military, diplomatic, and information strategies, all of which recognizes and advocates the primacy of the state.

³⁸ L.N. Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 15.

Chapter 1

The Kautilyan State

Kautilya's theory describes seven constituent elements of any state as part of an exposition of a theory of a circle of states as the basis for a foreign policy in an environment dominated by expansion through conquest. The elements of a state include the king, the ministers, the people, the fortified city, the treasury, the army, and the ally (external constituent). The aim of creating a well run state is to provide the base for expansion and thwart the expansion of external states into one's own. Therefore, before a king actually sets on an expedition of conquest, he has to employ measures to guard against the dangers that may weaken any of the constituent elements of his own state. The stakes are high. Kautilya uses the term *vyasana* (or calamity) to denote any weakness that may affect the constituent elements of a state, thereby preventing it from being used to its full potential in the conduct of foreign policy or war.

The duty of the king was first towards his people, to protect them in time of natural calamities and from enemies, both internal and external. The king had a threefold obligation in this regard: protection, administration, and welfare.¹ According to Kautilya, an ideal king is one who has the highest qualities of leadership, intellectual energy, and personal character. In *Arthashastra*, the king is the personal representation of the state since he embodies all the constituents.² He is a symbol of all the qualities of the society, and so Kautilya advises the king to achieve the highest levels of self control, through a foundation of knowledge and discipline instilled by giving up lust, anger, greed, conceit, arrogance, and foolhardiness. He recommends the king should avoid over-indulgence in all pleasures of life.³

¹ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 118.

² The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 8, Chapter 2 and verse 1 in Sanskrit language describes the ruler as the sum total of the constituents of a state. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 390.

³ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 1, Chapter 6 and verse 1 and 2 in Sanskrit language advises the ruler to exercise discipline and control over the senses. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 12.

The king must be energetic and devote 12 hours a day to state affairs, according to Kautilya, which include defense, secret consultations, intelligence, public audience, and administration.⁴ A king's life should be fully dedicated to the welfare of his subjects. "In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness; in their welfare his welfare. He shall not consider as good only that which pleases him, but treat as beneficial to him whatever pleases his subjects."⁵ This is more demanding than the king-as-state, described in the absolutist period of France's Louis XIV, for it calls for a king-as-exemplar of all that is good and desirable in the social make-up, all that makes the state strong and responsive to its constituencies.⁶

Kautilya also states that the king should be active in management of the economy. The root of socio-political wealth is economic activity, and lack of it brings material distress. In the absence of reliable and productive economic activity, both current prosperity and future growth will decay, and ultimately be destroyed. A king can achieve the desired objectives and riches by undertaking productive economic activity.⁷ Kautilya uses the word "treasury" (*kosa*) to denote the usable or practical wealth of the state. Kautilya says all state activities depend on treasury. From wealth comes the power of the government. With the treasury funding the army (*kosadanda*), the earth is protected and acquired.⁸ The relationship between wealth and military power is so vital, that Kautilya cautions the king that the army and the treasury should always be under royal control.

The sources of revenue the king can tap into are then detailed. These include income from crown property, from mines and metallurgy, from animal husbandry, from irrigation and other public works, from forests, from state controlled activities such as manufacturing industry—including salt, liquors, and leisure activities

⁴ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 1, Chapter 19 and verse 9-24 in Sanskrit language provides a timetable to the ruler to ensure effectiveness in governance of a state. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 46.

⁵ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 1, Chapter 19 and verse 34 in Sanskrit language advises a ruler to follow the policy of 'service before self'. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 47.

⁶ Louis' famous declaration, "L'etat, c'est moi," accepted a view of king as anyone he desired to be, beholding to no one but his own sense of rightness and ambition.

⁷ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 1, Chapter 19 and verse 35-36 in Sanskrit language recommends a ruler to pursue activity to ensure prosperity. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 48.

⁸ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 2, Chapter 12 and verse 37 in Sanskrit language describes the importance of economy for advancement of a state. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 110.

(courtesans, prostitutes, entertainers, gambling and betting)—taxes in cash and in kind, customs duties, auctions, gate and roadway tolls, transaction taxes, tariffs on trade, and a variety of fines.⁹ It is important that the king does not rely too heavily on any one source, and that the process or amount of extracted revenue does not negatively affect the revenue stream by unduly curtailing production or impoverishing the population. Both must be robust to support ongoing and future military campaigns.

Law and Justice

Kautilya states that an essential duty of government is maintaining order; social order as well as police or judicial order is needed to prevent and punish criminal activity. Kautilya enumerates topics concerning civil law that include family laws, laws of contracts, and laws of labor in addition to criminal law that includes recommendations for a penal code. A full description of the legal system elaborates on the procedures, the law of evidence in civil cases and criminal activities, investigation, and forensic science. Books 3 and 4 elaborate on the sources of the law, the duties of judges, magistrates, and clerks, civil procedure, and the law of evidence. All aspects of family law related to marital life, including inheritance, are discussed. Civil transactions related to loans, laws of property, contracts, labor, and partnership are covered, plus laws describing proper investigation, case injury, theft, and sexual offences. The prevention of crime is an important aspect in Kautilya's views on the maintenance of law and order, and clandestine agents were responsible for collecting information about various crimes. Professional conduct required certain obligations to the state. For example, doctors were responsible for reporting cases of severely wounded persons.¹⁰

Administration

Kautilya persuasively insists that an efficient administration is a prerequisite for a burgeoning economy in a state. The structure of the administration of an ideal state is explained in Book 2, which provides the duties of heads of departments and a

⁹ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 2, Chapter 6 and verse 1-8 in Sanskrit language explains the economic activity necessary for a state. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 75-77.

¹⁰ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 379.

mass of material related to their duties. Information about agriculture, forest produce, elephants, and liquor is given under the appropriate heads of department. The text even gives the salary scale of the officers. Kautilya also explains the proper administrative hierarchies for the countryside and fortified cities, as well as the organization of administrative offices and productive enterprises for each. The municipal regulations and the obligation of the citizens are also explained in the treatise.¹¹

Covert Activities

A king shall have his agents in the courts of the enemy, ally, the middle, and the neutral kings to spy on the kings as well as their eighteen types of high officials.

Miraculous results can be achieved by practicing the methods of subversions.

A single assassin can achieve; with weapons; fire or poison, more than a fully immobilized army.

Kautilya

Kautilya strongly advocated creation of a secret service with spies, double agents, and specialists, to include assassins, as a task of paramount importance for the king. The secret service was deemed essential for the security of the kingdom—the integrity of high-ranking ministers could be tested by using specialist agents, for example, as a check on their loyalties—and for furthering the objective of expansion by conquest. Two types of agents were to be employed: those who stayed in one place and those who travelled wherever they were required. Both types pursued cover occupations and were state employees. An elaborate network of spies was required to gather intelligence and maintain vigilance. Covert assassins were retained to kill secretly enemy chieftains and kings. Specifically, poisoners, wandering nuns, and ascetics were cleverly to be utilized. A special category was the double agent, who was in employment of the enemy but who also worked for the king.¹²

¹¹ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 308.

¹² Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 499.

The secret agents were spread widely. Women agents were used in disguises such as a holy woman, rich widow, an actress, a musician, a courtesan and so on.¹³ Clandestine agents were to be provided full legal protection, and were employed for testing the integrity of ministers and surveillance over the population in general and on various officials, secretly eliminating treacherous high officials, preventing subversion by enemy kings, trapping criminals and forest bandits, and detecting anti-social elements.¹⁴ The use of clandestine agents was extensive in relation to other states, both in context of foreign policy and war, and is a hallmark of Kautilya's prescription. In addition to clandestine agents, the king received guidance on manipulating opposing alliances, tribal chiefs, and various supporters of the enemy to induce a false sense of security before eliminating the opponent antagonist. In these ways, the secret service was used for both internal security of the state and to further the aims of foreign policy and war.¹⁵

With the state properly organized and an educated ruler willing and able to subordinate self-indulgence for social or aggregate good, the conditions are set for a successful foreign policy.

¹³ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 501.

¹⁴ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 4, Chapter 4 and verse 3-21 in Sanskrit language explains the clandestine activities to ensure security of a state. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 265-266.

¹⁵ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 501.

Chapter 2

Foreign policy

The welfare of a state depends on an active foreign policy

Kautilya

Kautilya's foreign policy involves logical analysis of all aspects of relations between states. The state comprises six internal constituents that include the king, the ministers, the fortified city, the population, the treasury, and the army. The power a state can bring to bear on promoting its own interests vis-à-vis other states depends on how close to ideal the internal constituents are. Kautilya provides a detailed theoretical analysis of general political situations and recommends actions to maximize the position of the state within those contexts.

As the king is the symbolic representation of the state, Kautilya is referring to the national interest of the state, when he refers to the interest of the king. As it is in the interest of every king to oversee the expansion of his kingdom, and conquest is the primary means for doing so, the would-be conqueror is called the *vijigishu*. A neighboring king is designated an enemy, for even if he is not actively engaged as a *vijigishu* himself, if he is competent, he is planning to do so when the moment is right. A bordering state is therefore always an enemy-in-being, if not in fact.¹ With this same logic, Kautilya can assert that the enemy's enemy is an ally. This creates the possibility of a third interactive state. A middle king is one that has a common border with both the conquering *vijigishu* and his designated enemy, and is thus either a potential enemy *or* an ally—the discerning *vijigishu* must be very shrewd in his policies towards such a potential swing state. Finally, a neutral king is one that is not directly involved, he has no common border with either the conquering or the enemy state, but is still within the sphere of influence of the *vijigishu*. It should be apparent that Kautilya's assessment and advice is perspicaciously ambiguous and morally

¹ Just as Thomas Hobbes would argue that even when conflict is not ongoing, the “threat of war is ever present,” and that suffices to create a hostile state of nature. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited by Richard Tuck (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 89.

dispassionate. It is unlimited by historical context or cultural values. Any king in the system can apply it—with equal effect —most auspiciously, an enemy.²

The *Arthashastra* is concerned with the security and foreign policy needs of a state interacting with numerous other states, what we would term today a multipolar state system. From his theoretical concepts and analysis of the interactions of such a system, Kautilya offers four devices or models to provide practical advice for specific situations. These are relative power, deviations from the ideal, classification by type of motivation, and the influence of the intangible and the unpredictable.³

Throughout Kautilya's analysis, the relative power equation between states forms the basis for distinction. In this classically realist conception, Kautilya begins by disaggregating complex multiple state interactions into discrete pairs of interacting bilateral relations. Each state's position is assessed relative to one other state at a time. The two states may be equally strong, or one must be stronger than the other. The general policy guidance provided by Kautilya is that a king shall make peace with an equally powerful or a stronger king, but wage war against a weaker king.⁴ This rule of thumb has exceptions, of course. Kautilya is a flexible and nuanced power optimizer, not a blind adherent to relentless power maximization.⁵

Thus the power equation contributes heavily to the proper policy of the state. With this base, an elaborate analysis of the relationship between power and bargaining is conducted, centered on a study of treaties offered and made between unequal states.⁶ The skillful negotiator, Kautilya repeatedly points out, is fully aware that power as a factor does not remain constant over time. Advantages come and go. Kautilya consistently recommends foregoing short-term advantages when concluding treaties, looking instead to the longer-term effects and the manner in which the

² Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 542.

³ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 543.

⁴ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 3 and verse 2 in Sanskrit language provides guidance to a conqueror regarding foreign policy. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 327.

⁵ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 3 and verse 6-20 in Sanskrit language explains the exceptions to the general rule of foreign policy. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 327-328.

⁶ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 7 and verse 7-30 in Sanskrit language explains the analysis of unequal treaties. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 343.

constitutive factors of the participating states are likely to change—and even be changed—by the constraints and enabling structures of the negotiation. Nonetheless, Kautilya emphasizes that the current condition of the states is the primary driver of the basic choice of policy.

Kautilya classifies the states as hostile or friendly, and creates further sub classifications such as types of neighbors, types of allies, and types of vassals in the *mandala* model. Kautilya also underscores the intangible and unpredictable factors that affect policy choices. Power is not measured in terms of the resources of the state or the size of the army alone. Kautilya lays greater importance on the power of good command, analysis, and judgment (genius), as well as following just policies. The capacity of intangible factors to influence outcomes depends upon the intellect of the commander; the ability to know and accept conditions that limit action. Although right cause and just action are powerful enablers, they are rarely sufficient. For example, Kautilya advises a weak king not to sacrifice himself in imprudent valor. It is better to adopt policies that enable one to survive and fight another day.⁷

In accordance with his perception of the world as a continuously interacting *mandala* of self-motivated kings, Kautilya's concept of diplomacy comprises two basic ideals of statecraft: world conquest and world consolidation. No matter the position of the state or the vector of extant power, the proper king seeks ultimately to enhance the size and position of his kingdom. This could be achieved by following a six-fold state policy to *transit from a state of decline to stabilization and finally progress or advancement*. The six-fold state policy comprises careful attention to war, peace, neutrality, invasion, alliance, and dual policy (war with one state and peace with another). Which policy is selected depends on the power of the state vis-à-vis other states, as well as the overarching environment. In a system of many interacting states, a king may be pursuing all six policies simultaneously! Put simply, a king should employ a suitable policy to match the environmental dynamics of political situations.

⁷ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 15 and verse 13-20 in Sanskrit language provides guidance to a weaker king. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 371.

Kautilya advocates diplomacy as an instrument to further the objectives of state consolidation and advancement. He recommends peace, if, in a given situation, advancement can be attained either by peace *or* war. The same general rule applies for decisions regarding neutrality and war. Wasting resources or depending on the fickle outcome of battle, when negotiation provides equal benefit, is undesirable. Depending on the political environment, a state desirous of expansion of its power should consider all components of the six-fold policy. Peace pacts should be conferred with cognate states and war waged on minor states. A war with a major power that could ruin the attacker should be avoided. Thus, power confers peace among states of equal status—a staple concept of modern realism. In another example of power politics, Kautilya recommends that a minor submissive state should be allowed to sue for peace. Carrying on a war beyond the point of reasonable gain may draw the wrath of an alliance of states.⁸

The basic principles of foreign policy

The guiding principles of Kautilya's foreign policy are straightforward. A king shall enhance the capabilities of the state, those which augment the resources and power that enable him to proceed on a campaign of conquest; the enemy shall be eliminated or neutralized; intellectual discretion or prudence in policy choices promotes stable growth and peace; peace is preferable to war, so long as the outcome is equivalent; a king's behavior in victory and in defeat must be just; those who help are allies, those who hinder are enemies.⁹

Kautilya insists that the welfare of the state depends on ensuring the security of the state within its existing boundaries and acquiring new territory to enlarge it. Towards achieving the welfare of a state, Kautilya recommends considering a policy of non-intervention or overt action by a deliberate choice of a policy, in order to enjoy the fruits of past acquisitions through consolidation. Active foreign policy is followed with an objective of enlargement of one's power and influence, and in turn, one's territory. The aim is to ensure progress of the state, either materially, in terms of its treasury (wealth) and army, or diplomatically, in terms of its relations with other

⁸ T.N. Ramaswamy, *Essentials of Indian Statecraft: Kautilya's Arthshastra for Contemporary Readers* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1962), 35.

⁹ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 546.

states. The status of a state is measured by its relative progress or relative decline vis-à-vis other states in the neighborhood. In the vicinity, there is always a natural enemy, and other neighbors could be hostile, friendly, or in vassal relationships. There may also be a buffer state between the king and the enemy. Many aspects of foreign policy concern a conqueror diplomatically outmaneuvering his enemy—setting the conditions that move the context of relations to one in which the enemy is isolated or reduced in power capability—and, when the conditions are suitable, a military campaign will be initiated.¹⁰

Kautilya also provides an analysis of the type of kings with whom alliance is beneficial, based on the character and motivation of an ally. Again, Kautilya advocates prudence regarding policy selection and negates spineless submission and foolhardy valor. He recommends peace, as compared to war, when the degree of progress is same for both. In war, there can be many disadvantages, such as loss of troops, uneconomic expenditure, and extended absence from home. If the benefit accruing from a treaty is fair, peace should be preferable; if the benefits are distributed unfairly, war is preferable. With stronger and equal states, peace is preferable, and war is recommended only against a weaker adversary, since it brings gains at the least cost.¹¹

Mandala theory or Circle of States

The *mandala* is said to consist of twelve kings or states. The twelve kings are the would-be conqueror (the *vijigishu*); the enemy (*ari*), whose territory is contiguous to that of the conqueror; the conqueror's ally (*mitra*), with territory immediately beyond that of the enemy; the enemy's ally (*arimitra*), with territory immediately beyond that of the ally; the ally of the conqueror's ally (*mitramitra*), with territory beyond that of the enemy's ally; the ally of the enemy's ally (*arimitramitra*), with the territory beyond the ally's ally; the enemy in the rear (*parsnigraha*) of the conqueror; the conqueror's ally in the rear (*akranda*), with territory behind that of the rear enemy; the ally of the rear enemy (*parsnigrahasara*) behind the rear ally; the ally of the rear ally (*akrandasara*); the middle king (*madhyama*), with territory adjoining that

¹⁰ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 547.

¹¹ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 548.

of both the conqueror and the enemy, and stronger than either of these; and the king beyond, or indifferent, or neutral (the *udasina*), more powerful than the conqueror, the enemy, and the middle king (figure 1).¹²

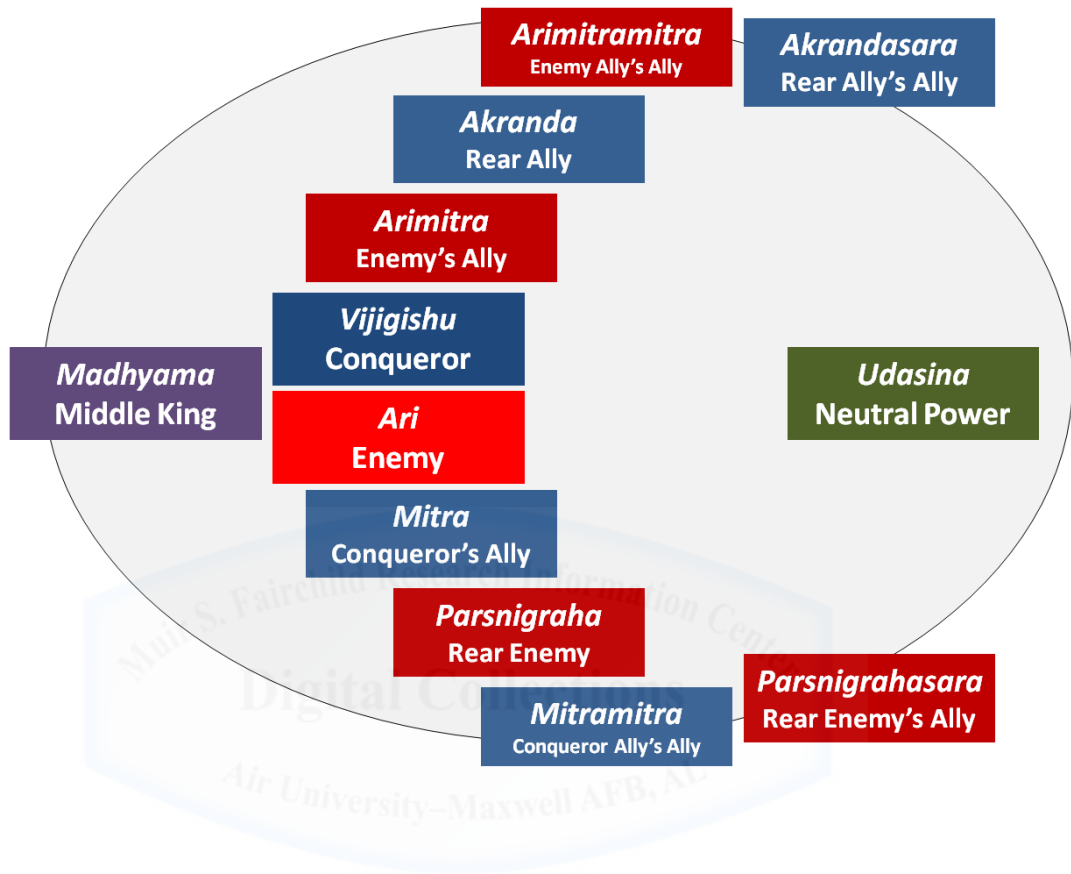


Figure 3: Circle of Kings

Source: Author's creation using R.P.Kangle's *The Kautiliya Arthashastra* Part 2

The model appears quite complex, perhaps overly so at first pass. For example, since each state has six internal constituents, the circle of states has a total of 72 internal constituents to assess. But once the whole is disaggregated, the theory is quite elegant—even parsimonious. The mandala dynamic is based on geopolitical or territorial position. Kautilya asserts that neighboring states tend to be hostile to each other and that states with a common enemy tend to be allies. The conqueror contemplating an expansion is regarded as the center (not geometrically or

¹² Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 3, 248.

geographically, but symbolically) of a number of states with interest in the matter that the conqueror has to account for in his quest for suzerainty. Note that it is possible to have several overlapping *mandala* models, depending on the details of territorial abutment in the extant state system. Each dyad, or pair, of adjoining states has a distinct *mandala*. Depending on the direction of expansion, the enemy in the rear becomes heel-catcher, and the ally in the rear can provide assistance. The same king could be a rear enemy, or an enemy, or an ally, or even a conqueror in changed circumstances. Except for the middle and neutral kings, all other kings are considered more or less in equal power under normal circumstances. The circle of states is generally a conglomeration loosely divided into two or more hostile camps, with the leader of one group trying to establish his hegemony over the entire conglomeration. The number twelve denotes the number of possible relationships and is not static or mandatory.¹³

The neighboring states may be hostile, friendly, or in a vassal relationship. Relations with foreign states are to be established and negotiations carried out through the ambassadors or envoys (*duta*).¹⁴ Three types of envoys were typical for Kautilya. The plenipotentiary capable of speaking on behalf of the king on a wide range of issues and vested with the authority to make and sign treaties; emissaries with limited powers of negotiating in specified issue areas; and an envoy who is little more than a message bearer. These ambassadors were regarded as inviolable by convention, with widely accepted rights of safe passage and diplomatic immunity—despite their more nefarious, but acceptable, functions. The duties of ambassadors were categorized into transmitting accurate information to and from their king, ensuring the observance of the terms of a treaty, creating dissensions among states hostile to their state, smuggling troops and other covert operatives secretly into the foreign state, kidnapping kinsmen of foreign prince, getting the treasury of the foreign prince

¹³ Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 3, 249.

¹⁴ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 13 and verse 43 in Sanskrit language recommends a ruler to position ambassadors in all states in his sphere of influence. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 366.

robbed, and seducing enemy officers from their loyalty. In other words, the ambassador or the envoy was a dignified spy and secret agent.¹⁵

Kautilya's extensive categorization and systematic treatment of all aspects of government were extremely useful for transmitting the essential duties of the king and his representatives, allowing this scientific approach to set the conditions or basic conventions for which the clever practitioner could apply intellect and cunning to virtually any situation. Accordingly, Kautilya offers six measures of foreign policy, selected as appropriate: making peace with a treaty (*samdhi*) containing conditions or terms; the policy of hostility (*vigraha*); the policy of neutrality (*asana*), remaining quiet and not overtly preparing or planning to proceed on a campaign; marching on an expedition (*yana*); seeking shelter or protection (*samshraya*) with another king or in a fort; and the dual policy (*dvaiddhava*) of peace with one king and hostility with another at the same time.¹⁶ The general rule, according to Kautilya, is consistent and straightforward—when weaker than the enemy, adopt a policy of peace; if stronger than the enemy, then choose hostility; if equal in power, pursue a policy of neutrality; if one is very strong, conduct a policy of marching on an expedition; when one is very weak, resign yourself to a policy of seeking protection. Finally, the dual policy is recommended when, with the help from another king, one can fight one's enemy.¹⁷ The general rule is not ironclad; it may not be applicable at all times, so Kautilya advocates flexibility in approach. The purpose of all the policies is to grow stronger than the enemy in the long run, and one may have to tolerate the greater strength of the enemy temporarily.

The policy of hostility has both an offensive and defensive component. If the king feels that any attack by the enemy could be successfully repelled, the king should resort to the policy of hostility and not a policy of peace. If the king feels that, from a secure position, he could ruin the enemy's undertakings, or that he can seize the enemy's territory, because the enemy is engaged in war on another front, he should

¹⁵ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 1, Chapter 16 and verse 33-34 in Sanskrit language explains the roles of an envoy. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 39.

¹⁶ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 1 and verse 6-12 in Sanskrit language explains the six measures of foreign policy. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 321.

¹⁷ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 1 and verse 13-18 in Sanskrit language describes the conditions and the recommendations for implementation of policies to gain advantage. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 321-322.

again resort to the policy of hostility.¹⁸ The policy of making peace is that of a king in a weak position (relative to the current enemy or from a threat on the horizon that may change the balance of power against current dominant position), and, therefore, making peace with a treaty is usually forced or coerced, because of the comparative weakness of the states, and is often punitive. The treaty may involve surrender of troops, treasury, or territory, for example. Kautilya recommends that, if forced into a treaty, the king should outwit the strong enemy when fulfilling the terms of the treaty, and, as the king grows in strength, he should endeavor to overthrow the enemy.¹⁹ There are many ways to appear compliant while actively working to corrupt or pervert the intent of the original treaty. The king should always attempt to do so, if he is the coerced party, and always expect the other king to do so, if he was the coercer.

The policy of staying quiet or neutrality is in expectation that the enemy would grow weak or be involved in a war, while the king would be in a position to consolidate and become more powerful. It is a period in which preparation for war is prudent. The policy of marching against an enemy is to be pursued when the king is stronger, and may be a part of policy of hostility. Kautilya also suggests the policy of marching along with the policy of peace when the situation is ripe.²⁰ Conquest is a long term goal, at the end of the continuum that begins with reversing decline, and there are many steps along the way. When practical, Kautilya recommends gathering the kings to march together to form a confederacy or coalition against the enemy. Especially when the kings are threatened by an outside force (as with Alexander's invasion in Kautilya's time), there may be no one among them who can be relied on to turn aside the invader, and it is in all their interests to unite. This policy is seen also as one emanating from a position of strength or leadership, at least relative to the coalition, for this will maximize the king's power and eventual gain. Weaker members who join the coalition to avoid dominance by the enemy will have little leverage, and in the event of the coalition's success will still be in a poor position

¹⁸ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 1 and verse 33 in Sanskrit language explains the conditions to launch offensive to gain a favorable situation. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 323.

¹⁹ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 3 and verse 22-35 in Sanskrit language explains the measures for a weaker king. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 328-330.

²⁰ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 4 and verse 18 in Sanskrit language recommends a ruler to adopt an offensive policy while retaining a defensive posture depending on the situation. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 333.

relative to the stronger members, whose designs for conquest will now be turned upon them.

Thus the policy of seeking protection is recommended only for a weak king who is attacked or threatened by a powerful enemy. It is a desperate situation, but not one without options, and so Kautilya also suggests the types of kings with whom protection should be sought.²¹ Throughout, the king must not despair and is advised to recoup his strength and regain independent status at the first opportunity.

The dual policy of peace with one king and hostility with another is intended primarily to acquire resources from one king to wage war with the enemy. The dual policy, according to Kautilya, is preferable to the policy of seeking protection.²² In the latter, the king is expected to maintain peace with the enemy—the protecting state promises to engage only if war continues. In the latter, the war goes on, and the conquering king now has additional resources to threaten his enemy, and a vastly superior position from which to negotiate a treaty, should doing so prove beneficial.

Kautilya also mentions the use of four ancient concepts that overlap the six measures of foreign policy and can be adapted to any of them. These concepts are adopting a conciliatory attitude (*sama*), placating with rewards and gifts (*dana*), sowing dissensions among enemies (*Bheda*), and using force (*danda*). Conciliation (*sama*) is achieved by praising the merits of a person's qualities, occupation, nature, or wealth, by extolling common relationships, explaining the advantages that will accrue to each of the two parties, and awarding an honor or a high rank. Placating with gifts (*dana*) is achieved by rewarding with money, granting favors, exempting from taxes, and giving employment.²³ According to Kautilya, gifts are of five kinds: relinquishing what is owed, continuing a payment already made, return of something

²¹ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 2 and verse 6-25 in Sanskrit language explains the options for a weaker king. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 325-326.

²² The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 2 and verse 4-5 in Sanskrit language explains the advantage of adopting dual policy over seeking protection. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 325.

²³ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 113.

received, giving something new out of one's own wealth, and permission to take something from the enemy.²⁴

Sowing dissensions (*bheda*) is carried out between enemies by creating mutual suspicion between them or by threatening one of them. Force (*danda*) can be used to deprive a person of his property, liberty, or life, and includes plunder, harassment, and death. These concepts can be used in isolation or combination depending on the situation. For example, Kautilya recommends the use of conciliation and placating with gifts for a son or a relative. For the citizens of the state, or members of the army, placating with gifts and/or sowing dissension works best. For neighboring princes, sowing dissension and the use of force is recommended. Kautilya shows that in the cases of allies and enemies, a combination of methods ensures success as the different techniques reinforce each other. Some methods are ideal, in particular cases, and others unnecessary. Conciliation is adequate for dealing with an enemy's ministers whose loyalties are uncertain, while placating with gifts for dishonest ministers of the enemy (traitors) can be efficacious. Dissensions are especially effective against confederacies, and force—properly applied at the most propitious times—is often successful against the powerful (who may find retaliation or continuing enmity cost ineffective).²⁵ While the six measures of foreign policy are utilized by the king for statecraft, the four concepts of attitude have wider application and cross the boundaries of all.²⁶ For instance, Kautilya recommends that the conqueror who has secured the submission of a king should treat him with honor, unless the king harbors hostile intentions. By treating the vassal unjustly, he not only faces the prospect of retaliation, he is likely to incur the wrath of the circle of states. The conqueror is required to respect the other kings in the vicinity of his kingdom, or they may unite and foil the conqueror's aspiration of world conquest.

The basic premise of all these policies is to ensure an increase in the power of the state at the expense of the enemy, so as to further the goal of conquest or expansion of the empire. The national interest is regarded supreme, and the policy that

²⁴ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 9, Chapter 6 and verse 24 in Sanskrit language explains the kinds of gifts that can be given to gain a favorable situation. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 423.

²⁵ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 9, Chapter 5 and verse 12-28 in Sanskrit language explains the use of dissensions to gain advantage. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 420-421.

²⁶ Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 3, 255.

best supports the growth and long-term health of the empire should be selected.²⁷ There is no sure option in all cases, only this guide to assist in providing options when it may appear there is little that can be done. Throughout, Kautilya advises the king to exercise his intellect to choose wisely amongst the six measures of foreign policy, always endeavoring to ensure the achievement of *prestige*, *wealth*, and *security* of the state.

Defense and War

In the circle of states, the conqueror is advised *first* to conquer his natural enemies, those on his border that are making preparations to expand their own kingdoms into the would-be conqueror's territory. Thereafter, once his augmented power is consolidated, he should overcome the middle king. Having achieved these objectives, he should subdue the neutral king and thereby establish his suzerainty over the circle of states. If the circle of states has only allies and enemies and not the middle and neutral kings, he should try to subdue the enemies and secure the allegiance of his allies. When a number of hostile neighboring kings exist, he should tackle them one after the other, growing in strength with his conquests.²⁸ The conqueror may engage in war to neutralize an enemy in the rear, to help an ally, or to subdue a small state. The ultimate objective remains the destruction of the natural enemy, who is the main hurdle to the conqueror's ambition. The enemy could be destroyed by clandestine methods or defeated in battle.²⁹

Kautilya states that the king is responsible for protection of the state from external aggression and enlargement of territory by conquest. Kautilya defines war broadly and does not confine it to only the physical or active component of hostility. The four kinds of war are: war by counsel (*Mantrayuddha*), describing the exercise of diplomacy employed by a weaker king when he considers it unwise to wage an open war; open war (*Prakasayuddha*), specifying time and place; concealed war (*Kutayuddha*), which refers to irregular warfare and psychological warfare, including

²⁷ Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 3, 254.

²⁸ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 13, Chapter 4 and verse 54-61 in Sanskrit language explains the strategy to achieve a continuing advantage in a circle of states. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 490-491.

²⁹ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 678.

instigation of treachery in the enemy camp; and clandestine war (*Gudayuddha*), using covert methods to achieve the objective without actually waging a battle. To engage in clandestine war, the king uses his agents, double agents, allies, vassal kings, tribal chiefs, and supporters of the enemy.³⁰

Kautilya recommends the king should not only guard against external threats, but also defend it against internal treachery, revolts, and rebellion. Various physical defensive methods and fortifications are enumerated in detail by Kautilya. The king is recommended to retain control over the military, primarily by ensuring that the chiefs of the military are well paid so they are not tempted by the bribes of the enemy, testing their integrity in manners already described, and with constant surveillance carried out through clandestine agents. It is also important to ensure that soldiers remain loyal, and this requires a combination of military organization, recruitment and promotion, and cultural appreciation. For recruitment in the army, Kautilya preferred drawing from trained traditional warrior clan (*kshatriyas*). If a larger force is required than could be drawn from the *kshatriyas*, it could be augmented through the use of other professional classes (*shudras* and *vaishyas*) as part of the forces. These groups tended to have strong ties to the state and, especially in the case of the warrior clans, high standards of loyalty and military virtue.

War is the ultimate expression of state power interaction, and Kautilya spends considerable time on the practicalities of planning and executing the military campaign. Kautilya lists eight factors that have a bearing on the success or failure of a military campaign that a king must take cognizance of before commencing. The first factor, as always, is power, which is of paramount importance. Kautilya defines power as not just military might or economic strength, but also intellectual capacity that enables a king to conduct an objective analysis and make a correct judgment. On campaign, intellectual power, military might, and enthusiasm and morale are the three constituents of power. The next two factors, he asserts, are place and time. Place concerns terrain; time refers both to the season when battle is likely and the expected duration of the battle. The three factors (power, place, and time) are interdependent. Only when a king is confident and sure that he is superior in power, space, and time,

³⁰ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 676.

shall he proceed to consider other factors. Otherwise, he is likely to be weakened or defeated.³¹

The next two factors for consideration are the right kind of troops to be mobilized and the right season for campaign. Four wings were described in the *Arthashastra*: elephants, chariots, horses, and infantry. Each has its strengths and weaknesses, and unique logistics and maintenance. Kautilya cautions that before these two factors are considered, the king should have confirmed that there is no danger of revolt in his kingdom when he is away. The king should calculate what he hopes to achieve by the campaign, considering the nature of his gains and the extent of his losses.³² The last factor to be considered by the king is the possibility of treachery, either internal or external or a mixture of both. Kautilya makes a reference to the danger of an ally defecting, and the four methods of conciliation are recommended for dealing with the situation.³³ Kautilya also mentions that the king and councilors must agree on the course of action before setting out and at critical junctures in the campaign. If not, trouble is inevitable and will influence whether the venture results in success or failure. He strongly recommends that once a decision is made to proceed on a military campaign, it must be pursued steadfastly.³⁴

Kautilya states that once a king is aware of these eight factors and analyses them, giving due weight to their relative importance, a correct judgment is possible. Again, these are not exhaustive in detail but only in category. The *Arthashastra* provides much assistance in organizing one's thoughts and focuses the king's plans, but there is still much subtlety in the practice of statecraft. Kautilya cautions, for example, that an expedition can achieve an advantage for the conqueror but, in so doing, also provides advantage for a future enemy, when the king in due course sets his sights on a campaign that is directed against some other king. In such a case, if the enemy has gained more than the conqueror; the power balance between them will tilt

³¹ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 9, Chapter 1 and verse 33-44 in Sanskrit language explains the importance of relative power, place and time for setting up a campaign. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 408.

³² Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 626.

³³ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 9, Chapter 3 and verse 1-8 in Sanskrit language describes the requirement of negation of unrest, and provides measures to deal with unfavorable situations before proceeding on a campaign. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 413-414.

³⁴ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 626.

in the favor of the enemy. In such a special case, as Kautilya calls it, the primary objective of defeating the natural enemy becomes extremely convoluted. Therefore, Kautilya recommends a complex analysis of factors before a king embarks on a campaign of this nature.³⁵

Kautilya states that a king shall engage in declared war when his military is superior, his instigations in the enemy camp have been successful, all precautions against dangers have been taken, and the terrain is suitable to the conqueror.³⁶ If these conditions are not satisfied, the king shall use deception in his campaign. The enemy shall be attacked when his forces are suffering from a calamity, are unprotected, and are on unsuitable terrain compared to the attacker. The attacker should lure the enemy onto unsuitable terrain (if the enemy is on suitable terrain) by pretending his own unreliable forces have suffered a rout. Then, he should attack and destroy the enemy forces. Kautilya suggests that, if a frontal attack is unfavorable, the attack shall be from rear and vice-versa; similarly, if attack on one flank is unfavorable, it shall be made from the other. The enemy troops should be tired by attacking with alien or jungle troops and then attacked by fresh traditional troops of the conqueror.³⁷ Subterfuge and misdirection are the staples of battle.

The enemy should be made to believe that he has won and then ambushed by the conqueror's forces from safe positions. Any force that has to fight facing the sun or wind shall be attacked. Kautilya recommends forest, narrow path, marsh, mountain, valley, uneven ground, mist, and night as opportunities for ambushes.³⁸ He instructs that physicians with surgical instruments, equipment, medicines, oils, and bandages, along with women, cooked food, and beverages should be stationed at the rear. Various battle arrays and formations are enumerated for the conduct of the battle, and the mechanism of laying a siege and capturing a fort is also explained in detail. Kautilya strongly advocates the use of psychological warfare and propaganda against

³⁵ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 626.

³⁶ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 10, Chapter 3 and verse 1 in Sanskrit language explains the conditions for engaging an enemy in declared war. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 438.

³⁷ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 10, Chapter 3 and verse 2-14 in Sanskrit language explains the conditions when a deceptive approach to warfare is recommended, and ways and means to overwhelm the enemy. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 438.

³⁸ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 10, Chapter 3 and verse 15-24 in Sanskrit language describes the strategy for deception warfare. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 439.

the enemy forces. Finally, Kautilya recommends that a conqueror rule the acquired territory justly, in accordance with the customs and traditions of the local people.³⁹

Conclusion

Kautilya's foreign policy provides guidance to a wise king to further the national interests of the state that include *security*, *wealth*, and *prestige*. The concept of diplomacy is primarily to achieve world conquest and world consolidation. Therefore, six measures of foreign policy are recommended for a state, to transit from a state of decline to stabilization, and finally achieve progress or advancement. The policy to be employed depends on the relative power, strategic environment, and dynamics of the political situation. The aim of the policy is increase in power of the state at the expense of the enemy to further the goal of conquest or expansion. Kautilya defines war as *an* expression of the foreign policy of a state. Kautilya provides guidance to a king to employ the elements of national power to achieve a state of continuing advantage. Kautilya provides a *grand strategy*.

³⁹ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 740.

Chapter 3

The Grand Strategy

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is an anthology of political wisdom and theory—the essence of an art of statecraft. According to Kautilya, the focus of statecraft should always be the safety and comfort of the people of the state—the word *artha* simply denotes the material well being of the individuals. Kautilya argues that the wealth of the nation is in its territory and the people who follow a variety of specific occupations.¹ Consequently, the state has an important role in maintaining both the physical size of the state and the skills and interests of its population, and it is the highest duty of the king to provide security to the people while preserving the wealth of the people. To do so, state leadership is required to ensure maintenance of law and order and to uphold the fabric of the society. In other words, the state provides internal security and maintains social order for the people of the state.

Kautilya advises the leadership to pursue just and equitable economic policies that increase the revenues of the state, but does so in a manner that also increases the economic well-being of the populous and ensures the needs of the people are met. “A king who impoverishes his own people or angers them by unjust exactions will also lose their loyalty.”² Therefore, Kautilya advocates that the focus of the king's economic policies should always be the welfare of the people of the state. To emphasize the importance of the people, Kautilya states: “There cannot be a country without people and there is no kingdom without a country.”³ He then adds, “It is the people who constitute a kingdom; like a barren cow, a kingdom without people yields nothing.”⁴ In another passage, Kautilya says “a king who observes his duty of

¹ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 15, Chapter 1 and verse 1 in Sanskrit language explains the importance of territory for prosperity of the state to ensure welfare of the people. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 512.

² The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 5 and verse 27 in Sanskrit language describes the need for a ruler to focus the economic policies to benefit the people of the state. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 335.

³ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 13, Chapter 4 and verse 5 in Sanskrit language explains the importance of people of the state to the ruler. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 486.

protecting the people justly, according to law goes to heaven, unlike one who does not protect his people, or inflicts unjust punishment.”⁵

It is clear that a king who uses his position to further his personal wealth or satisfy earthly desires is a bad king. It should also be clear that a king who ineptly takes his country to war expends resources and impoverishes the foundation of his power. With this logic, the duties of a king as stated by Kautilya are clear. These are protection of the people of the state from external aggression; maintenance of law and order within the state; and safeguarding the economic welfare of the people. The three objectives of *Arthashastra* are interrelated and flow one from the other; promotion of the welfare of the subjects leads to acquisition of wealth, which, in turn, makes it possible to enlarge the territory by conquest.⁶ The objectives are plain. To protect the people of the state from external threats, the military is employed by the leadership to expand the state and repel invaders. To protect it from internal threats, the police power of the state maintains order, and the just magistrates of the king fairly administer the law. Economic policies are designed to increase the wealth and welfare of the population, which, in turn, increases the state treasury. In example and in rhetoric, the king upholds the reputation and moral center of the state. The population is ever the center of focus. The political leadership symbolizes prestige; the economy, wealth; and the military, security. Kautilya states “in the happiness of his subjects lies the king’s happiness; in their welfare his welfare. He shall not consider as good only that which pleases him, but treat as beneficial to him whatever pleases his subjects.”⁷

⁴ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 7, Chapter 11 and verse 24-25 in Sanskrit language describes the critical role of manpower in the state machinery. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 357.

⁵ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 3, Chapter 1 and verse 41 in Sanskrit language advises a king to ensure just rule of his kingdom. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 195.

⁶ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 15.

⁷ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 1, Chapter 19 and verse 34 in Sanskrit language advises a ruler to accord the interests of the people, highest priority. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 47.

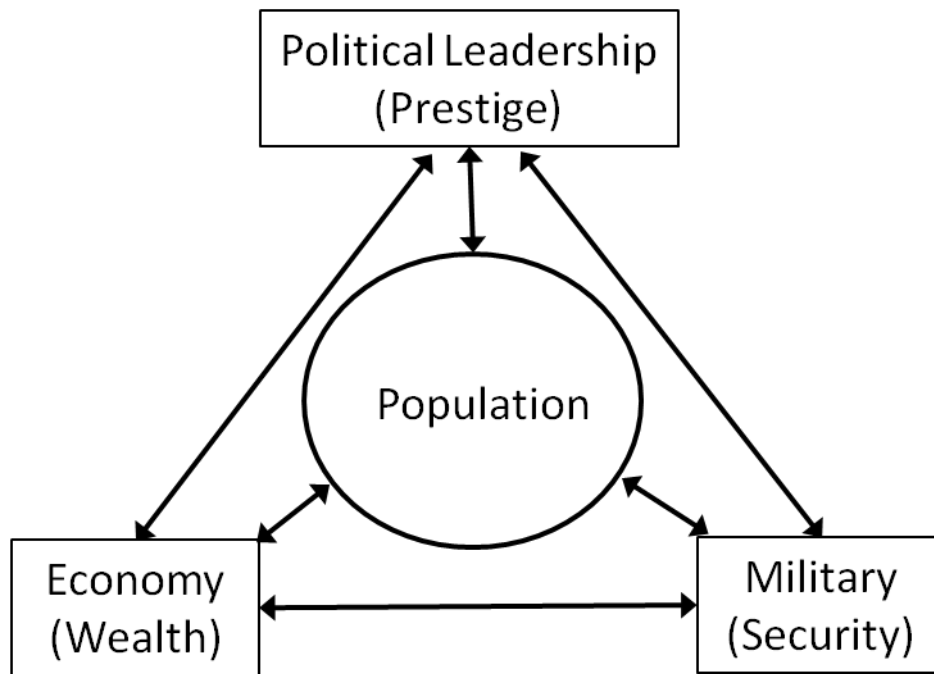


Figure 4: Kautilya's Trinity of National Policy

Source: Author's creation

The trinity of the political leadership, the economy, and the military with direct relation to the population is a useful model that has universal application. For example, in irregular warfare, the focus of the local government, as well as the insurgents, is the population of the state, as both seek to achieve legitimacy in their eyes. The French counter insurgency theorist, David Galula states flatly that an insurgency is a competition between the insurgent and the government for the support of the people.⁸ The insurgents approach the people of the state for sanctuary, supply, and support in order to survive. If the insurgents are not able to garner the support of the population, then the chance of success is minimal. For their part, counter-insurgent operations require the judicious employment of the military to provide security and thereby acquire the support of the population to defeat the insurgency.

The financial expenditure for such operations requires the support of the population, lest the costs of security become prohibitive. Political leadership has a

⁸ Che Guevara, *Guerilla Warfare* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 148.

decisive role to play in gathering and strengthening the political will of the people to counter insurgency. The Kautilyan model would appear to hold even in modern conditions of war and insurgency. In pursuit of a counter insurgency campaign with the stated goals of security and nation-building in countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq, the US has focused on rebuilding local economies, national military and local police forces, and legitimate political leadership with active support and involvement of the target population. Towards achieving the objective, a vital role is required by the political leadership, economy, and the military of the US, but none of this is possible without the unwavering support of the population of America. No plan for success in foreign states is possible, as Kautilya reminds us, without first attending to the needs of the population at home.

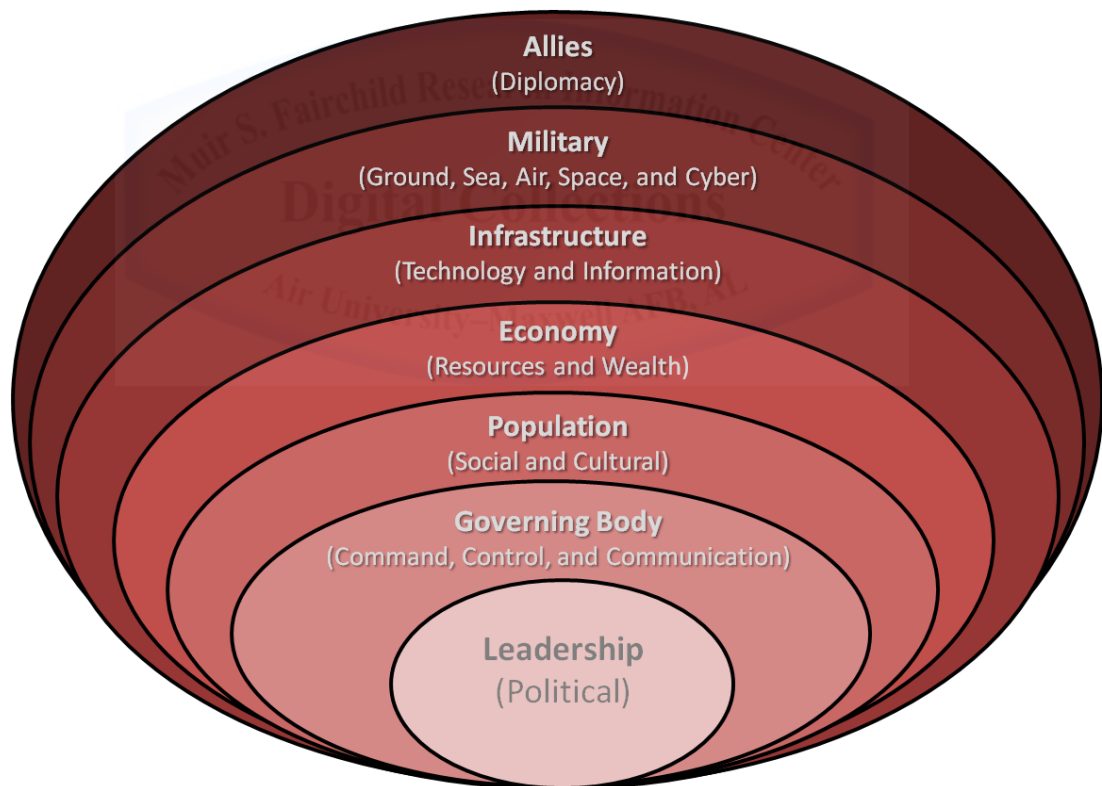


Figure 5: Elements of National Power for Grand Strategy

(Note: Also constitutes Enemy's Target Structure)

Source: Author's creation

The seven constituent parts of a state, as enumerated by Kautilya, provide a framework with vital significance. According to Kautilya, the power that a state can bring to bear in promoting its own interest vis-à-vis other states depends on how close to ideal the constituents are. Therefore, before embarking on a campaign, it is essential to harness the power of the different constituents of the state and, at the same time, affect the constituents of the enemy adversely. Therefore, a sound grand strategy would include the orchestration of all instruments of the national power: *political, economic, military, social, information, and diplomatic*. The Kautilyan model of constituents of a state also denotes the target structure for operations. Study of any war from this perspective highlights the significance of constituent interaction at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. For example, during the Battle of Britain, the strong political leadership of Winston Churchill, backed by a skilled Council of Ministers, with unwavering support of the population, tapping into commercial civilian resources cultivated from decades of government policy supports, assisted by an elaborate and continuously evaluated air defense infrastructure, prosecuted by valiant military operations, supplemented by extraordinary intelligence and spy networks, all coalesced to secure victory and shatter the myth of invincibility of the German *Luftwaffe*.

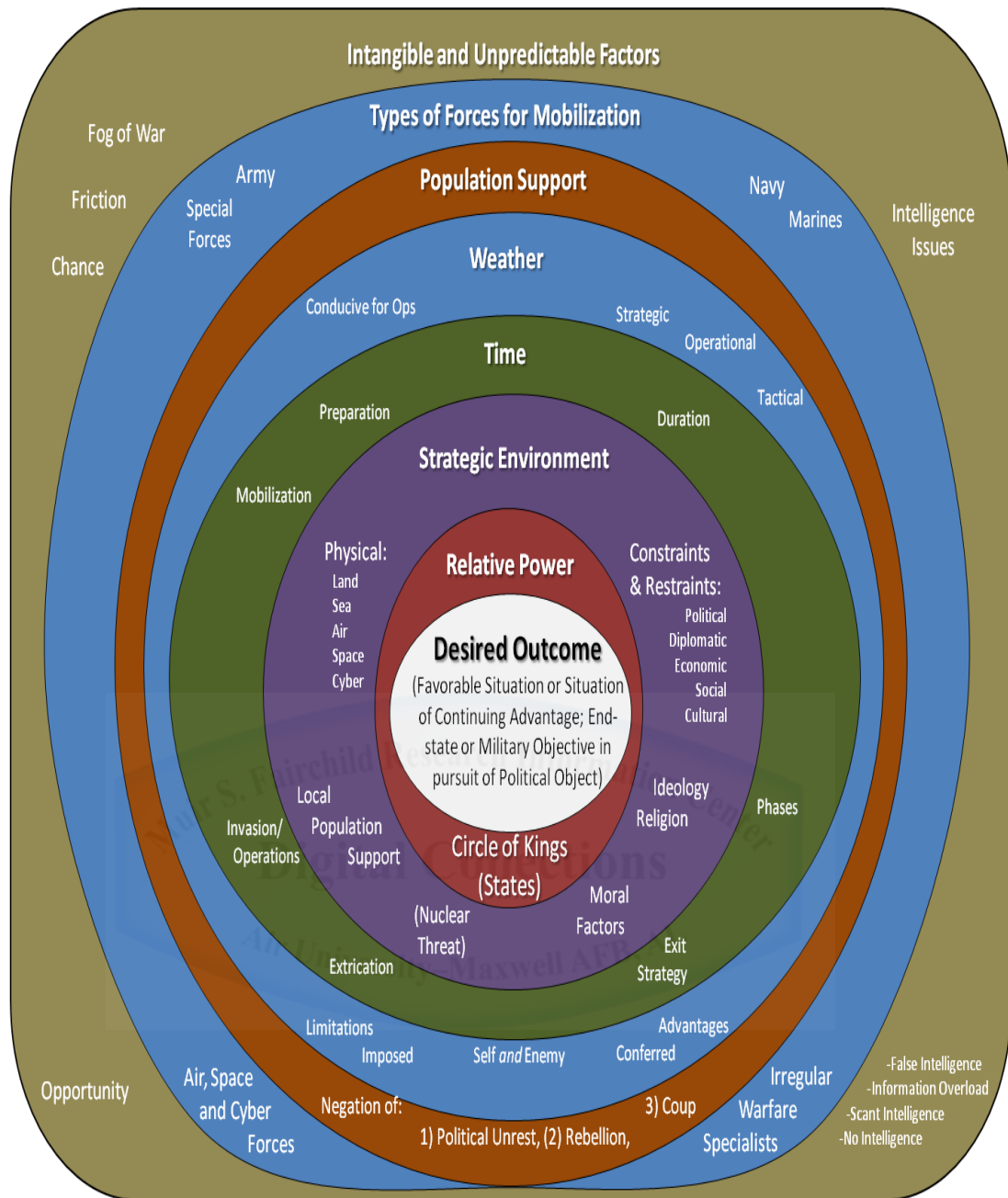


Figure 6: Analysis of Factors for Planning and Execution of Military Strategy

Source: Author's creation

Kautilya lists eight factors that need consideration before starting a military expedition. These are: (1) the relative value of the end compared to likely losses, expenses, and gains; (2) the relative power of the enemy state; (3) the place of operations (primarily geography and terrain for Kautilya, but today including the various unique operational mediums of land, sea, air, space and cyber domains of

war); (4) time (primarily duration) of the anticipated military engagement, including what we would recognize today as an exit strategy; (5) season for operations, predominantly weather considerations; (6) composition of suitable forces to be employed in operations; (7) acquiring the support and political will of the population and prior negation of political unrest; and (8) consideration of the dangers that are specific to the campaign at hand, which includes intangible and unpredictable factors.

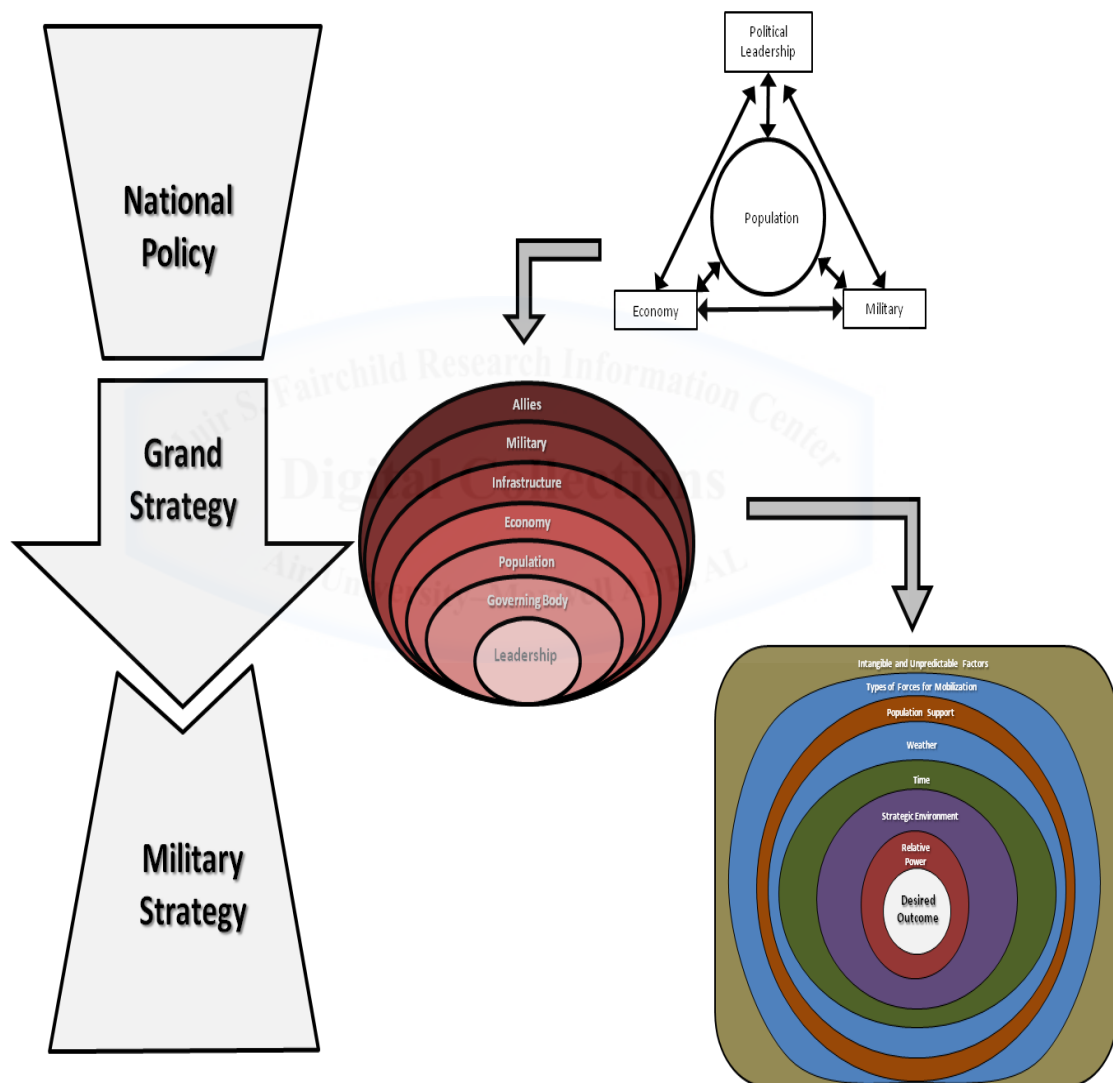


Figure 7: National Security Strategy

Source: Author's creation

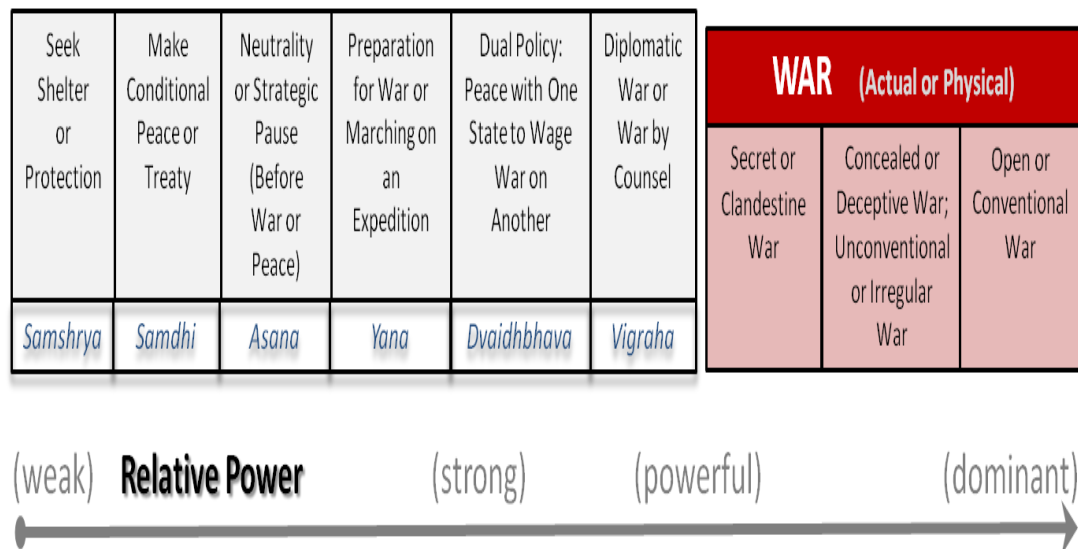


Figure 8: Foreign Policy Options

Source: Author's creation

The timelessness of Kautilya's model is readily demonstrated by the example of the state of Israel. Located contiguous to several hostile Arab nations, Israel has been involved in hostilities (*vigraha*) with its neighbors throughout its short modern history. These include open war in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982, with relatively unremitting clashes in the interims. Hamas, the PLO, and a variety of state-supported terrorist organizations have waged irregular warfare against Israel without interruption. Full-scale intelligence operations, including clandestine wars, sabotage, recruitment of double agents, and assassinations, have been carried out by all parties. Israel has acquired help from England, France, and the US to wage war against the Arab states (dual policy), has both accepted and coerced punitive treaties, has joined and rebuffed coalitions, and courted the support of former enemies. Israel has been in preparation for war (*yana*) continuously since its inception in the mid-twentieth century, but has also employed declared and *de facto* states of neutrality (*asana*) between its various wars. Since 1948, from a state of relative obscurity and almost complete foreign dependency, Israel has gradually stabilized and reached a state of advancement to gain a foothold amongst the Arab nations.

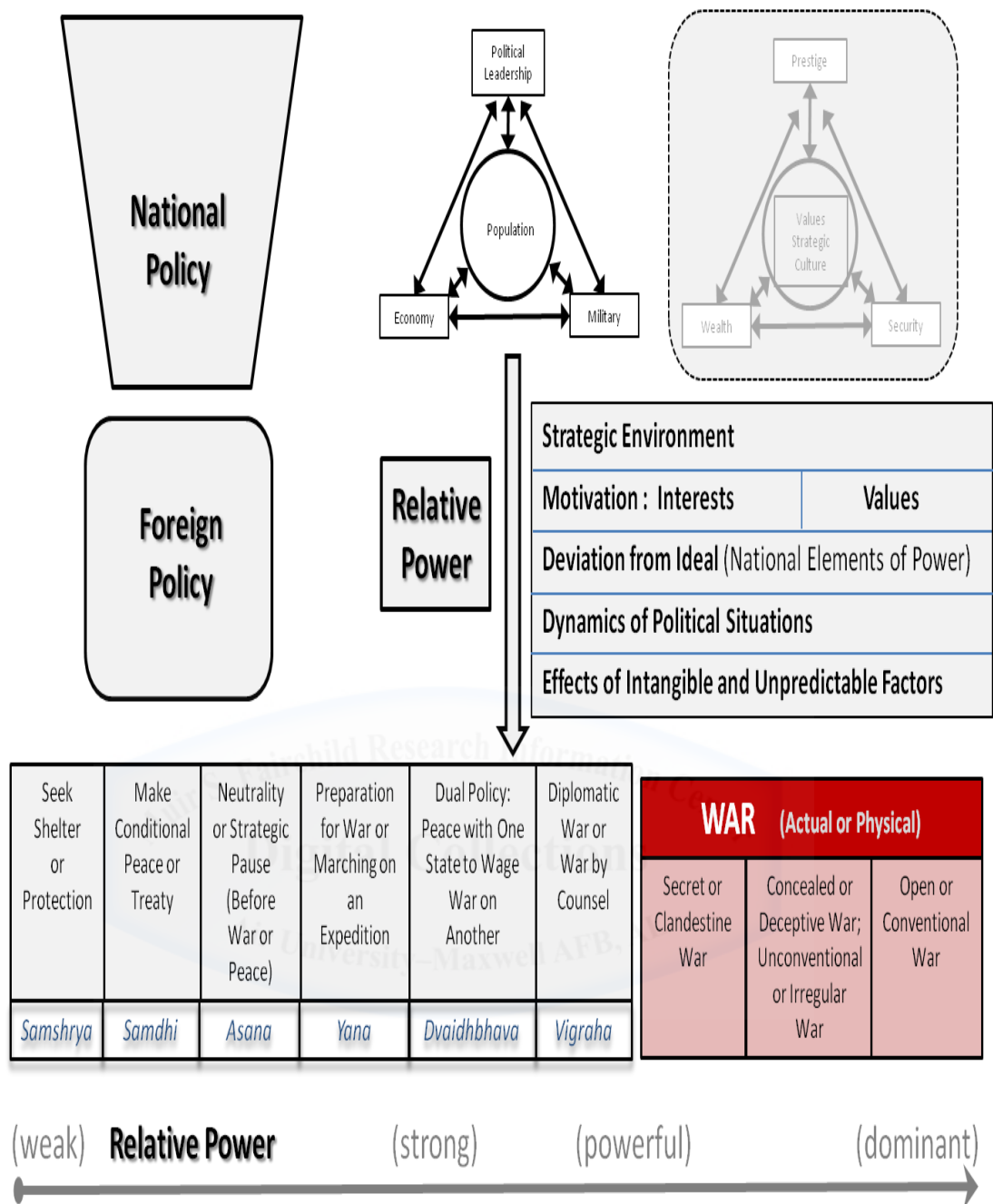


Figure 9: National Security Policy

Source: Author's creation

Such are factors *of* war. But Kautilya also describes the necessary factors *in* war—those vital to the military campaign. Kautilya's three constituents of military power are the commander's intellect or capacity for planning and carrying out the

complexities of a campaign, the forces available or supported in the campaign, and the enthusiasm and morale of the combatants also appear to be staples of military success through history. All were embodied by the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte at his zenith, who was used to define that enigmatic quality called military genius by the great strategist Carl Von Clausewitz.⁹

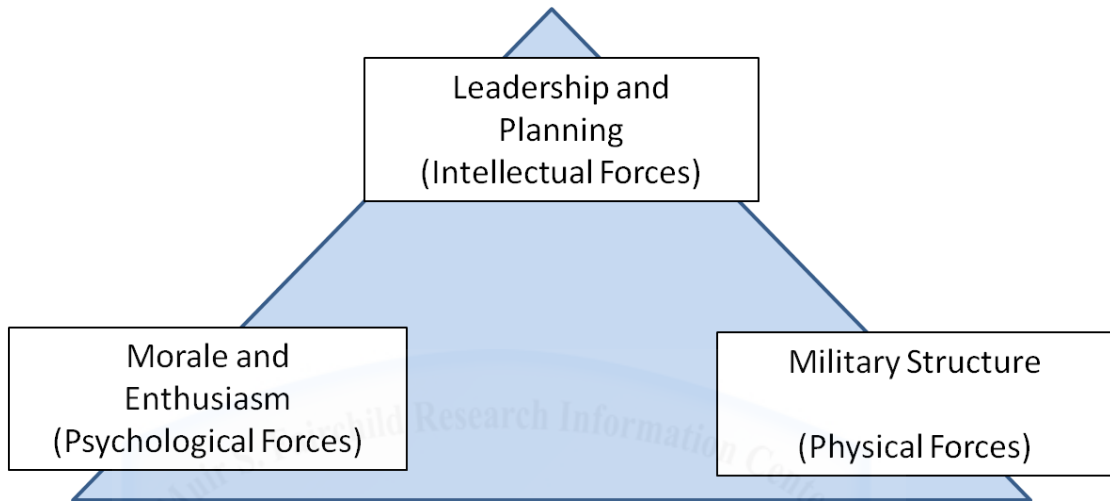


Figure 10: Military Power

(Note: The words Diplomatic, Informational, or Economic can be substituted for military to convey power in those realms)

Source: Author's creation

Kautilya espoused two primary attributes in his *Arthashastra*. Although predominantly understood as a realist when addressing matters related to the foreign policy of the state, he reveals a decidedly liberal side when referring to the primacy of the people in the proper governance of the state. Kautilya advocates expansion of territory to bring economic prosperity and security to the state. While these can bring glory and personal wealth to the king, these considerations are tangential to ruling

⁹ Clausewitz defines military genius as a commander who employs intellect and temperament to overcome complex situations and has exceptional achievements in war. He examines moral and psychological elements through the medium of genius. The commander is also required to be a *statesman*, be aware of the political situation, and knowledgeable about the extent of achievements possible. See Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 100-112.

well and justly and should be foregone at any time the safety and well-being of the people are at risk. It is his harsh realist critique, and his advocacy of even unethical or immoral actions in pursuit of state power, that leads many readers to question Kautilya's validity in today's context, more so to chide him for a reputation as a moral and loved teacher of ethics. But Kautilya does not advocate unethical and immoral behavior for personal gain or petty desires. The ends justify the means only when the state is in peril. Only on behalf of the state is the king or his representative allowed a moral pass for what would otherwise pass for cruel or brutal behavior—and then only if the overarching goal of providing for the greater good of the people is achieved.

Kautilya asserted that, when properly understood as a process of providing for the welfare and safety of the people, three discernible conditions of state health are evident. These are a kingdom in a state of decline, stability, or advancement. When in a state of decline or in a condition of stability, each kingdom should focus on defending itself by making alliances and solving internal problems. If the kingdom has a prosperous economy and support of the population, and is without calamities and endowed with strong leadership, it should further its national interests by advancing and conquering neighboring states.¹⁰

The goal of the science of *Arthashastra* was power. "Power is strength" and "strength changes the mind," which implies that power enables control, not only externally but also endogenously.¹¹ Kautilya incessantly extols the king to "destroy his enemies and protect his subjects."¹² He advocates spying on the king's most trusted ministers, officials, and subjects to gather information, ensure vigilance, and avoid corruption.¹³ The premise of extensive spying and intricate tests conducted on his own people exhibits a decidedly realist mindset. Kautilya also dispassionately discussed the topics of arrest on suspicion, various forms and efficacies of torture, and

¹⁰ Boesche, *The first great political realist*, 4.

¹¹ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 6, Chapter 2 and verse 31, and also Book 7, Chapter 14 and verse 2 in Sanskrit language explain the importance of power. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 319, 366.

¹² The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 14, Chapter 3 and verse 88 in Sanskrit language recommends a king to destroy his enemies and thereby, reveals a realist nature. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 509.

¹³ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 2, Chapter 35 and verse 13 in Sanskrit language advises a king to spy on own people to prevent crime. However, this exhibits a realist behavior. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra*, Part 2, 184.

assassination in *Arthashastra*.¹⁴ All of this is because of his belief in the primacy of the state. Where the supreme interest of the nation was concerned, the ends do justify the means: “moral principles must be subordinated to the interests of the state in as much as the moral order depends upon the continued existence of the state.”¹⁵

And yet Kautilya incorporates the modern liberal nature of statecraft while addressing the governance of the people. He advises the king to concentrate on the welfare of his subjects and earn their loyalty. In *Arthashastra* (chapter 13), Kautilya advises the king to ensure just and compassionate rule of even the territory acquired by violent conquest. He recommends that the king follow policies beneficial to the populace of the acquired territory, tolerable to the new citizenry’s culture, and to act domestically always according to the law. Kautilya advises the conqueror to treat the defeated king with honor, and the defeated soldiers of the enemy humanely.

Conclusion

National interests shape the policy of a state. The essential factors governing the formulation of national policy are the political leadership (prestige), economy (wealth), and the military (security). Key to Kautilya’s persuasiveness is that the national policy centers *on* the population. It is *for* the people and *of* the people. The national policy provides guidance for a grand strategy that includes all elements of national power: the political leadership, the governing body, the population, the economy, the infrastructure, the military, and the allies. The grand strategy in turn guides the military strategy. For military strategy, the analysis of desired outcome, relative power, strategic environment, duration of operations with an exit strategy, weather, composition of forces, support of population, and consideration of intangible and unpredictable factors are of paramount importance. Power is defined as a combination of intellect, military might, and morale and enthusiasm. In other words, power comprises intellectual, psychological, and physical forces.

¹⁴ The Kautilya *Arthashastra* Book 4, Chapter 8 and verse 4 in Sanskrit language recommends torture to a criminal acting like a realist. See Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part 2, 274.

¹⁵ Charles Drekmeier, *Kingship and Community in Early India* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 201.

From the past, the future. It is one thing to show that the *Arthashastra* was a valid and influential political and military guide for India more than two millennia ago, and quite another to make the case that it still holds relevance today. While there are many more recent examples of state systems that not only have attracted theorists espousing similar (if not nearly as comprehensive) political doctrines—Machiavelli’s prescriptions and proscriptions in an age of independent Italian city-states, Bismarck’s masterful display during the so-called Concert of Europe, or even Kissinger’s perspective of the Cold War—if it can be shown that Kautilya’s logic remains viable in the most modern of systems, in the most technically advanced areas, then we can truly assign it the title of *timeless* classic.



Chapter 4

Kautilya's Astropolitics

Space operations and activities have greatly enhanced the national power of the United States, to the point that its current military and commercial advantage in world affairs is entirely dependent upon continuing space access.¹ For better or worse, the US has a greater dependence on space systems for its national security and economic prosperity than any other country in the world.² Loss of space access or the benefits from its current leadership position in space would effectively level the playing field for a number of potential enemies; therefore, space stability is fundamental to the national security of the United States.

With support from space, US military forces have clearly demonstrated their battlespace dominance in warfare.³ The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have confirmed the value it places on space-based reconnaissance, communications, and targeting capabilities, and displayed that extraordinary capacity to the world. Since Operation Desert Storm in 1991, there has been a steady increase in the capabilities of US military space assets and, in turn, an increasing deadliness and reliance upon space assets for its military operations—a trend that is likely to continue.⁴ Appropriately, there is a growing concern among US policy makers and military leaders regarding the vulnerability of these systems to attack and disruption.⁵ If denying the US critical support and enablement in times of conflict or war effectively diminishes its capacity to act militarily, then it is critical for the US to ensure its military space power is developed and employed to preserve peace on terms favorable to the US and its allies.

¹ John J. Klein, *Space Warfare: Strategy, Principles, and Policy* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 155.

² Forrest E. Morgan, *Deterrence and First-Strike Stability in Space: A Preliminary Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010), 3.

³ Morgan, *Deterrence and First-Strike Stability in Space*, 9.

⁴ Michael Sheehan, *The International Politics of Space* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 94.

⁵ Morgan, *Deterrence and First-Strike Stability in Space*, 1.

Space operations can affect the diplomatic, economic, information, and military instruments of national power.⁶ To preserve peace, the strategy of space warfare should be part of a comprehensive and integrated plan to augment all of these instruments of national power. The task is daunting, and complex, perhaps even counter-intuitive, but Indian strategist Kautilya provides a straightforward and practical framework to apply space power in the pursuit of peace.

Kautilya's theory of the state describes seven constituent elements: the political leadership, the governing body, the people, the infrastructure, the economy, the army, and the ally (external constituent).⁷ The power a state can bring to bear in promoting its own interests with respect to other states *depends on how close to ideal* the internal constituents are. According to Kautilya, the leadership of the US is responsible for orchestration of all elements of national power; in this case, constituting an effective National Space Policy and National Security Space Strategy that would ensure the enhancement of national security and economic prosperity. From its own perspective, and that of many of its allies, the US should maintain leadership in the space environment, a task that necessitates both sustaining leadership in space technology and adopting an innovative and effective space strategy.

US leadership has listed the objectives for space activities as enhancement of ability to understand emerging threats, global projection of power, conduct of operations, support to diplomatic efforts, and enabling the global economic viability.⁸ Kautilya would appreciate these goals, but in his framework would understand them as leadership's aspiration to *sustain prestige, security, and wealth*. This is the model by which dominant states in a multi-state environment maintain their positions. It is how they lead *well*.

The economic constituent of Kautilya's state provides a platform for achieving and sustaining a lead in space operations that includes an effective institution of research and development. Change is a constant in Kautilya's description of foreign policy dynamics, and so constant innovations are necessary to sustain technological superiority. While the economy feeds space activities, those activities give back to the

⁶ Klein, *Space Warfare*, 36.

⁷ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 14.

⁸ US National Security Space Strategy Unclassified Summary (January 2011), 1.

economy. Satellites perform telecommunications services, for example, which currently form the most profitable segment of the commercial space sector, thereby adding to the coffers of the state.⁹ The free market model of capitalist competition is demonstrably the most efficient producer of wealth and, to the greatest extent possible, should be allowed by the leadership to operate without constraint.¹⁰ A strong economy in such a state provides the greatest impetus for sustaining civil, commercial, intelligence, and military activities in space, by virtue of its unguided pursuit of profit. In peacetime, this is the most efficient means of generating wealth.

The security of the state should not be left entirely to market forces, of course, and proper administration of space commercial activities and appropriate state-based funding is necessary to develop some scientific and technical capabilities, for which a security need is projected, but a current commercial value is not yet mature. This was the case for Global Positioning Satellites (GPS), for example. The cost of a network of satellites that would broadcast positioning and timing signals could not justify the expected economic return from them in the 1980's, and so the project was assigned to the US Air Force. Invaluable in changing the fundamental mindset of military planners to long-distance precision strike, enabling many of the operations the US military currently undertakes with vastly outnumbered forces, it has been an even more unexpected boon to the US and global economies. Companies that find increasing uses for precise GPS signals and sell the gadgets and software that rely on them generate billions of dollars annually. Supply systems based on the military signals have revolutionized military and commercial logistics—heuristically named just-in-time-supply models are revolutionizing manufacturing. The precise timing signals broadcast by the GPS system allow for extremely efficient encryption systems and have made international banking and business transactions absolutely secure. None of these benefits were forecast to the extent that GPS has changed world habits, and the US Air Force still provides the hardware to the global economy out of its slice of the Defense Department's budget.

While the economy supports the infrastructure required for space operations, and space operations are in turn enhanced and funded by a healthier economy, there

⁹ Klein, *Space Warfare*, 7.

¹⁰ Everett C. Dolman, *Astropolitik: Classical Geopolitics in the Space Age*, Cass Series--Strategy and History (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002), 147.

are physical and ideological constraints and enablers that must be taken into account. The terrain of space dictates the placement of satellites in orbit, for example, and restricts in some cases the number of platforms that can peacefully coexist (as with the internationally-managed geostationary belt). Terrestrial basing requirements of space support operations require infrastructure for construction, launch, tracking, and control of space assets.¹¹ Support and nurturing of the industrial base for space activities supplements the requirements of space-related infrastructure. The harnessing of talent in the scientific community from business and universities is vital, as is channeling human talent into effective and efficient space activities through state encouragement and incentives, thereby increasing the economic and military power of the United States.

Having briefly described the roles of leadership, economy, infrastructure, and population in space operations, it is useful to examine more closely the role of the military in furtherance of proper national policy. According to Kautilya, the military is one of the most potent instruments of national power to achieve the objectives of the state. Recall that state policy links directly to the welfare of the people by increasing wealth, security, and prestige.¹² Therefore, it is essential to deter and to be prepared, if necessary, to prevent aggression against space infrastructure that supports US national security. The role of the military is clearly defined in the national security space strategy; “US forces must be able to deter, defend against, and defeat aggression by potentially hostile nation-states. This capability is fundamental to the nation’s ability to protect its interests and to provide security in key regions.”¹³

First, the US should deny adversaries the benefits of attack by improving cost effective protection and enhancing the resilience of space infrastructure (passive defense), incorporating effective redundancy. Cooperation with allies can also enhance space redundancy capabilities. To reduce the perceived vulnerability of its current reliance on space forces, the US military should train as much as practical to operate in a degraded space environment. It should also endeavor to engage other space faring states in diplomatic efforts to create increased penalties for violating

¹¹ Dolman, *Astropolitik*, 77.

¹² Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 15.

¹³ US National Security Space Strategy Unclassified Summary (January 2011), 10.

agreed to norms of behavior, such as those for managing international use of the geostationary belt. If these measures prove insufficient, and deterrence fails, the US in self-defense should respond with reciprocal and proportional force in accordance to the principles of international law.¹⁴ This means, of course, a leadership that is *willing* to use force under proper conditions and a military that is *able* to use force when directed.

The military should be prepared and able to ensure the protection of national interests during peacetime, crisis, and conflict. In this context, military power is the means to achieve the political objectives of the state. Applying Kautilya's state constituency theory at this level, one quickly finds the predominant significance of military leadership. America's current National Military Strategy (2011 NMS) defines proper military leadership as "how the US exercises the full spectrum of military power to defend national interests and advance international security and stability."¹⁵ The NMS further elaborates the need to grow leaders who can innovate against and effectively out-think adversaries; who focus on the principles of leadership, and not simply power; and who emphasize values and people as much as platforms and capabilities.¹⁶ These elaborations are classically Kautilyan in intent, if not in direct extraction from his *Arthashastra*. The protection of this vision of leadership, for both Kautilya and in the NMS, also entails defense of the command, control, and communications infrastructure of space assets, while retaining the capability to affect the leadership (command, control, and communications) infrastructure of the enemy by disruption, denial, degradation, or destruction through military means.

The aim is to deter the enemy from interfering with space assets by implying the adverse economic effect that would accrue for the enemy by the use of aggression actions and maintaining and being prepared to retaliate militarily, should those actions in fact be initiated. The military would be responsible for protection (active defense as well as the passive measures detailed above) of space infrastructure, while retaining the capability to affect the space infrastructure of the enemy—including its ground-based and terrestrial systems. Similarly, space-based assets could and should be

¹⁴ US National Security Space Strategy Unclassified Summary (January 2011), 11.

¹⁵ US National Military Strategy Unclassified Summary (January 2011), 1.

¹⁶ US National Military Strategy Unclassified Summary (January 2011), 19.

utilized for psychological propaganda on actual and potential enemies to degrade their capabilities and force them to sue for peace.

The military has options for employing either defensive or offensive strategies to achieve the national object during peace, crisis, and war. Following a Kautilyan design, the US should employ a defensive posture with offensive capabilities. Currently, this would imply aggressive militarization *of* space without weaponization *in* space. Space-based assets should be capable of some self-defense against surprise attacks (running the gamut from countering electromagnetic interference or jamming, narrow-beam transmissions and sophisticated encryption to limit hostile takeover through hacking, hardening against possible energy weapons that could include laser blinding, increased situational awareness to detect potential kinetic threats from collision, and the like) and increased passive defenses (such as on-orbit storage of spare satellites for rapid reconstitution of damaged networks and increased maneuver capability/smaller satellite design to make target detection and engagement more difficult) to make them more likely to be available for support to conventional military forces operating on land, at sea, and in the air. Increasing assurance of space support for offensive capabilities of the military would enhance deterrence by increasing the likelihood of inflicting unacceptable damage on the enemy in case of aggression. The US already has a state of military dominance of space by the virtue of its overwhelming presence, primarily due to the demise of the Cold War. The technical and economic capacity of potential in space competition is currently quite limited given its on-orbit and infrastructure lead, as well as the strong second-tier space capabilities of America's allies. The US simply does not need to create the conditions for significant conflict in an area where it has so much to lose relative to its adversaries. It is not unchallenged, but along with its allies the US is the strongest conventional military power on earth. Maintaining the status quo is in its interest.

Nonetheless, change is inevitable, and there are potential threats to the status quo on the horizon. China is aggressively moving to make an impact in space, and although its recent demonstration of an anti-satellite (ASAT) earth-to-space missile still appears pale in comparison to US capabilities, it is a reminder that complacency is unwise. There is also the very real possibility of the re-emergence of Russia (with demonstrated ASAT weapons and a sophisticated military space cadre) due to

changes in economic wealth and access to resources that could come about with changes in global weather patterns or strife in traditional oil-rich areas of the Middle East. In addition, a host of other nations, including potentially hostile states such as North Korea and Iran have demonstrated the capability to launch a missile into space. Should they detonate a nuclear device in low-earth orbit, or even create substantial debris fields there, US support from space could be severely degraded. Already space debris is a nuisance for the US, and debris reduction programs are nowhere in sight.

Still, while these threats may hold significance in the future, they are not a cause for major alarm at present. The US should pursue greater employment of passive defensive systems that protect from ballistic missiles and include hardening of space systems against laser, particle beams, and general electromagnetic attack.¹⁷ Other passive methods include incorporating materials that minimize radar, infrared, or optical detection, reducing the probability of detection and attack by the enemy. In addition, the US should pursue technology for employment of self-protection using active ground-based weapon systems to counter offensive anti-space weapons.¹⁸ For the defensive strategy, satellites with adequate shielding against charged particles could be positioned within the Van Allen radiation belts to protect against hostile space systems lacking such shielding.¹⁹

Positioning satellites within close proximity to high value or national assets of a neutral or enemy state could also deter potential enemies from launching an attack. Although satellites are vulnerable to offensive weapons, counter measures such as these can be developed to deter and, if necessary, defeat the hostile actions of the enemy.²⁰ Defense alone is not enough, however. If there is no response or punishment for attacking (other than using up some of one's own wealth or capacity) then there is no reason not to try again when one is stronger. The right of self-defense also permits retaliation through military actions to defeat the attacker.²¹ For strategic defense to be effective, it should be followed by an effective offensive action, which should incorporate dispersal and concentration. Dispersal implies using space systems with smaller and more numerous satellites operating in networks or in shorter-duration so

¹⁷ Klein, *Space Warfare*, 155.

¹⁸ Klein, *Space Warfare*, 76.

¹⁹ Klein, *Space Warfare*, 76.

²⁰ Klein, *Space Warfare*, 77.

²¹ Klein, *Space Warfare*, 78.

as to limit the damage sustained when a single, expensive, long-lived satellite is disabled. It is also possible to distribute functions to a wider variety of satellites, so that the loss of one does not crash a particular capability. Such distribution of functions helps ensure uninterrupted functionality.²² Concentration refers to the firepower or desired effects to defeat the adversary, defending against his attack, or neutralizing the threat of the enemy through use of ground-based lasers or other kinetic/directed-energy weapons, and sea or air-launched anti-satellite weapons.²³ The US could also employ non-physical methods of attack to degrade, diminish, or deny the ability of an enemy to use space for economic gain by using the systems to deceive or block space-based telecommunication transmissions to prevent commerce through space.²⁴ The US could employ microsatellites to achieve adequate degree of space control with respect to emerging threats.²⁵ Simple devices that could maneuver into the path of an incoming threat, or block the view of an opponent's intelligence-gathering satellite might suffice. This could enable low cost expendable space systems capable of forming an aggressive capability while retaining a defensive posture.

Having described a notional military strategy for space, it is instructive to test it against Kautilya's six measures of foreign policy.²⁶ There is a current negotiated treaty regime in space, and additional treaty negotiations in progress. The US should honor the space treaties to the extent they allow time to consolidate its commercial interests and dominate market share in space-related industry and commerce; continue its innovation dominance in space through superior technology and, where needed, funded research; increase its space presence to entangle American and allied interests in space; and study the relative value of strategic positions in space. Note that Kautilya also permits violation (or renegotiation) of the treaties as an integral part of safeguarding the interests of the state. As circumstances change, the advantages gained from compliance may become weaknesses. There is no reason to abide by treaty for the sake of sentimentality or habit when the treaty no longer serves the interest of the state. Kautilya relentlessly advocates primacy of the state. Therefore, the US could—and should—violate or renegotiate these treaties when technology is

²² Klein, *Space Warfare*, 76.

²³ Klein, *Space Warfare*, 162.

²⁴ Klein, *Space Warfare*, 109.

²⁵ Klein, *Space Warfare*, 123.

²⁶ Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, 549.

cost-effective for exploitation of space resources from other celestial bodies for commerce, with cooperation from the allies.

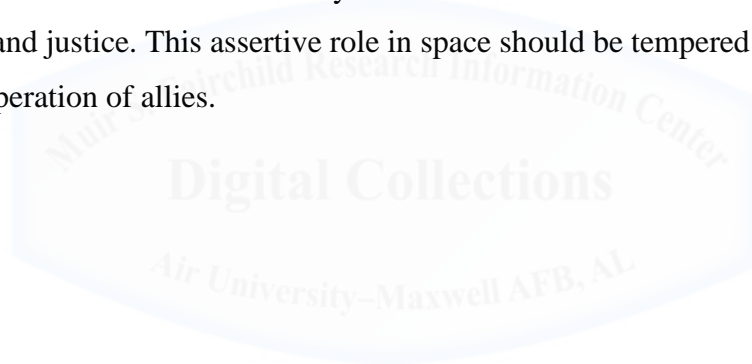
Hostility comprises Open War; Concealed War (deceptive and psychological warfare); and Secret War, using the covert methods to achieve the objective without waging a battle. The policy of hostility is often in place even when making peace through treaty, as Concealed and Secret War continue even when active or Open War is not evident. Thus, Kautilya sees peace as a momentary interregnum between wars, and the leader that is not preparing for the next, inevitable war is the one that will lose. The US is in such a position. It already possesses a superior space power that enables it to conduct a conventional war in synergy with air, sea, land, and cyber power. It has not yet figured out how best to apply space power in support of conflict short of Open War, and so research could be instituted that tests the efficient use of space capability in Guerilla and Secret or Concealed Warfare to achieve state objectives, without waging a more risky Open War.

Staying quiet is a pause in implementing a policy of peace or war (already initiated). The US should use the current pause to review space strategy and innovate to enhance the effectiveness of technology. Preparing for war, in case of an impending engagement, the US should maintain operational preparedness by planning effective employment of space power resources to achieve the military objectives. Seeking protection, or taking refuge in strong defenses (the equivalent of a fort), is one method of staying quiet. Adequate defensive measures (hardening, shielding, and dispersal) should therefore be employed to safeguard space assets.

Finally, Kautilya's dual policy is making peace with one state in order to pursue, with its help, the policy of hostility towards another. Given the rapid growth of space interaction in the last fifty years, and the possibility of suddenly disruptive technologies that could rapidly upset the current status quo, the US should maintain and nurture allies to augment space power when necessary, develop complementary technologies, and to employ as proxies or partners when taking hostile measures to rein in a rogue nation.

Space activities have contributed to the enhancement of security, wealth, and prestige of the US, creating an unambiguous need to sustain leadership in space and

utilize space power to sustain an advantageous peace. Kautilya's theory provides a framework for leaders to assess and enhance power of the state. Political leadership is responsible for orchestration of all elements of national power; constituting an effective national space policy and national space security strategy. The economy provides space infrastructure and research and development for ensuring leadership in space. Therefore, it is essential to harness the opportunities for commerce, provided by space. The military should be able to deter, defend, and defeat aggression. It does this by preparing to launch a counter offensive in space when needed—by adopting a defensive posture with latent offensive capability and by maintaining presence in space that accords with its dominance. The US should abide by advantageous treaties, but be prepared to renegotiate or violate space treaties if the national interests (security, wealth, and prestige) are threatened or could be enhanced. The weak are forced to accept treaties, the strong make them to their advantage. The US is strong, but this does not mean it will always be so. Treaties should show the weaker parties respect and justice. This assertive role in space should be tempered with the support and cooperation of allies.



Conclusion

Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, composed in late fourth century BCE, provides an insight into the ancient wisdom of political philosophy. *Arthashastra* is defined as an art and science of governance, diplomacy, and war. The magnum opus was composed by Kautilya, India's greatest Statesman-philosopher, who is credited with the enthronement of Chandragupta Maurya, and the glorious expansion of the Mauryan Empire, which extended from Persia in the west (including Afghanistan and Pakistan) to Bengal in the east. The Mauryan army was colossal, and comprised 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 8000 chariots and 9000 elephants. Patliputra was the capital of the empire and had achieved fame as the largest city in the world. Kautilya, also known as Chanakya and Vishnugupta, was the undisputed genius of the strategy that led to the foundation and growth of the empire. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* provides guidance to a wise king to defeat his enemies and rule effectively on behalf of the general good.

Arthashastra is a guide for rulers to ensure protection of a state from external aggression, maintenance of law and order within the state, safeguarding the welfare of the people and promoting economic prosperity. Kautilya insists that the prosperity of the state and its people cannot be maintained unless new territory is acquired by alliance or conquest. In a political environment with many kings, being content with one's own territory makes one vulnerable to the expansionist ambition of the other kings. Therefore, employment of numerous peaceful or hostile means is advocated by Kautilya. Describing war as more than mere combat, as a complex and interconnected set of activities across layers of human interaction, Kautilya unraveled the guidelines of a complete governing system. Therefore, *Arthashastra* is a compendium of administration (law, order, and justice), economy (taxation, revenue, and expenditure), and foreign policy (defense and War).

In India, since time immemorial, *artha* has been considered as one of three realms of human existence: *Dharma*, *Artha*, and *Kama*. These relate to legal relations, political and economic relations, and individual and social relations. *Artha* concerns the earth where people live and seek their individual material wellbeing.

Arthashastra is the science concerned with providing and extending general wellbeing on earth. Therefore, *Arthashastra* is a science of statecraft or of politics, administration, and diplomacy.

Arthashastra has three parts that correspond to the three objectives of the state; wealth (economy), justice (law and order), and growth (expansion of territory). Kautilya advocates achievement of a stable and prosperous state through just and efficient administration that, in turn, provides proper conditions for the accumulation of wealth and augmentation of territory. Throughout *Arthashastra*, three fundamental objectives flow from one to other: good governance (promotion of the welfare of the subjects) leads to good economy (acquisition of wealth) that allows for the expansion of territory. *Arthashastra* provides a grand strategy for the effective governance of a state that includes political, economic, military, diplomatic, and information strategies. Kautilya emphasizes primacy of the state.

Kautilya describes seven constituent elements of a state: the king, the ministers, the people, the fortified city, the treasury, the army, and the ally (external constituent). The elements of the state are a part of an exposition of a theory of a circle of states which form the basis of foreign policy in an environment dominated by expansion through conquest. Therefore, before proceeding on an expedition of conquest, the king has to employ measures to guard against the dangers that may weaken any of his constituent elements of his own state. Therefore, Kautilya advises the king to be diligent towards his duty to the people of the state. The duties of the king include protection, administration, and welfare. Kautilya describes an ideal king as embodying the highest qualities of leadership, intellectual energy and personal character. Kautilya advises the king to be active in management of the economy. Kautilya states that all state activities depend on the treasury. From wealth comes the power of the government. With the treasury funding the army, the territory is protected and acquired. Kautilya emphasizes the relation between the wealth and military power and advises the king to ensure active control over both at all times. Kautilya states that the essential duty of the government is maintaining order, social order as well as judicial order, to prevent and punish criminal activity. Kautilya insists that an efficient administration is a prerequisite for a burgeoning economy of a state. Therefore, Kautilya advises a king to ensure proper governance by effective

administration, to uphold law and order, and to promote growth of the economy and military power, in short, to promote *security, wealth, and prestige*.

Kautilya advocated creation of a secret service with spies, double agents, and specialists, to include assassins, to perform the functions: surveillance and reconnaissance over own, enemy, and allies; gather intelligence; provide security (internal and external); exercise vigilance over officials; ensure law and order; carry out subversion and espionage; and assassinations. The secret service was an important arm of the king to gain clarity of the internal and external situation, and exercise positive control to ensure the well-being of the state.

Kautilya's foreign policy reveals logical analysis of all aspects of relations between states. Kautilya professes that the power a state can bring to bear on promoting its own interests, vis-à-vis other states, depends on how close to ideal its constituents are. The detailed analysis of general political situations and recommended actions provide a glimpse of the "genius." Kautilya advocates, forgoing short-term advantages to ensure strategic gains. Kautilya describes the intangible and unpredictable factors that affect policy choices. Kautilya lays great importance on the power of good command, analysis and judgment (genius). For specific situations, Kautilya provides four devices: relative power, deviation from the ideal, classification by the type of motivation, and the influence of the intangible and unpredictable. Kautilya's concept of diplomacy comprises two ideals of statecraft: world conquest and world consolidation, to be achieved by following a six-fold state policy to transit from a state of decline to stabilization, and finally progress or advancement. The six-fold state policy comprises prudent action related to war, peace, neutrality, invasion, alliance, and dual policy (war with one state and peace with another). To employ suitable policy to match the strategic environmental dynamics of political situations is the apex of diplomacy.

The objective of diplomacy is state consolidation and advancement. Peace is preferable to war if advancement can be attained by peace or war. Peace pacts should be conferred with cognate states and war waged on minor states. Active foreign policy is followed with an objective of enlargement of one's power and influence; through these one's territory. The aim is to ensure progress of the state, either materially in

terms of its treasury (wealth) and army or diplomatically in terms of its relations with other states.

The *mandala* comprises twelve kings or states that includes the would-be conqueror, the enemy, the middle king, the neutral king, and other allies and enemies as depicted in figure 1. The circle of states is generally a conglomeration loosely divided into two or more hostile camps, with the leader of one group trying to establish his hegemony over the entire conglomeration. Relations with foreign states are facilitated through the ambassadors. Kautilya offers six measures of foreign policy: making peace with a treaty containing conditions or terms; the policy of hostility; the policy of neutrality; marching on an expedition; seeking protection with another king or in a fort; and the dual policy of peace with one king and hostility with another at the same time. The basic premise of all policies is to ensure an increase in the power of the state at the expense of the enemy, and to further the goal of conquest or expansion of the empire. The national interest is regarded supreme, and the king exercises his intellect to choose the right policy to ensure the achievement of prestige, wealth and security of the state.

The ultimate objective of the king is the destruction of the natural enemy, who is the main hurdle to the conqueror's ambition of establishing suzerainty over the conglomeration of states. To achieve the objective, Kautilya defines four kinds of wars: war by counsel, describing the exercise of diplomacy employed by a weaker king when he considers it unwise to wage war; open war, specifying time and place; concealed war, which refers to irregular warfare and psychological warfare; and clandestine war, using covert methods to achieve the objective without actually waging a battle. Kautilya also cautions a king to guard against internal treachery, revolts, and rebellion before proceeding on a military campaign. According to Kautilya, war is the ultimate expression of state power interaction. Kautilya lists various factors that need extensive consideration before commencement of a military campaign. The factors include power (intellectual power, military might, and enthusiasm and morale), place, time, right kind of troops for mobilization, right season and desired outcome of the campaign. Kautilya advises a king to engage in declared war, only when his military is superior, his instigations in enemy camp have been successful, all precautions against dangers have been taken and the terrain is

suitable to the conqueror, otherwise, the king shall use deception in his campaign. Kautilya advocates use of psychological warfare and propaganda against enemy forces. Kautilya recommends that a king establish a just rule in the conquered territory.

Kautilya defines war as an expression of foreign policy. The aim of the foreign policy is furtherance of the national interest. The objectives are protection of the people of the state, employment of economic policies to increase wealth and welfare of the population. The political leadership symbolizes prestige; the economy, wealth; and the military, security. The Kautilyan model for formulation of national policy (figure 2) forms a trinity with the leadership (prestige) at the apex, the economy (wealth) and the military (security) constitute the other elements of the trinity. The population of the state is an inherent focus of the trinity that influences the national policy. This model has an universal application. The seven constituent parts of a state provide a framework with vital significance for formulation of a grand strategy that includes all instruments of the national power: political, economic, military, social, information, and diplomatic. The Kautilyan model of constituents (figure 3) of a state also denotes a target structure for operations also denotes the target structure for operations.

Kautilya lists eight factors that need consideration for planning and execution of a military strategy. The factors (figure 4) are: (1) the relative value of the end compared to likely losses, expenses and gains (desired outcome); (2) the relative power of the enemy state; (3) The place of operations (land, sea, air, space and cyber); (4) time (primary duration) of the anticipated military engagement, including an exit strategy; (5) weather considerations; (6) composition of suitable forces to be employed in operation; (7) acquiring the support and political will of the population, and prior negation of political unrest; and (8) considerations of the dangers that are specific to the campaign which includes intangible and unpredictable factors. Kautilya's three constituents of military power are the commander's intellect or capacity for planning and executing the complexities of a campaign, the forces available or supported in a campaign, and the enthusiasm and morale of the combatants. Kautilya provides a framework for formulation of national policy, a

model for generating the grand strategy, and a list of factors that govern the planning and execution of a military strategy.

While Kautilya is predominantly a realist when addressing matters related to the foreign policy of the state, he reveals a liberal side when referring to the primacy of the people in the proper governance of the state. Kautilya considered the interests of nations to be supreme; the ends do justify the means: moral principles must be subordinated to the interests of the state, when the existence of the state is in peril. However, Kautilya advises the conqueror to treat the defeated king with honor and the defeated soldiers humanely. He recommends that the king ensure just rule of the conquered territory.

Kautilya's theory provides a framework for the formulation of a strategy that finds applicability even after 2500 years. The *Arthashastra* is truly an anthology of political wisdom. Kautilya advises the political leadership to consolidate the power of the state through internal regulation of crisis and strategic control of external relations. Therefore, *Arthashastra* is not a treatise based on general principles, but a strategy concerned with recommending practicable policies in any conceivable situation. The power lies in true interpretation of the *Arthashastra* to unravel timeless grand strategy to achieve a better peace or a continuation of an advantageous favorable situation in the future.

Appendix A

Kautilya's pearls of Wisdom

In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness; in their welfare his welfare. He shall not consider as good only that which pleases him but treat as beneficial to him whatever pleases his subjects

In the interests of the prosperity of the country, a king should be diligent in foreseeing the possibility of calamities, try to avert them before they arise, overcome those which happen, remove all obstructions to economic activity and prevent loss of revenue to the state

The king and his rule encapsulate [all] constituents of the state

A king who observes his duty of protecting his people justly, according to law, goes to heaven, unlike one who does not protect his people, or inflicts unjust punishment

A king can reign only with the help of others; one wheel alone does not move (a chariot). Therefore, a king should appoint advisers (as councilors and ministers) and listen to their advice

No enemy shall know his (king) secrets. He shall, however, know all his enemy's weaknesses. Like a tortoise he shall draw in any limb of his that is exposed

The root of wealth is economic activity and lack of it brings material distress, in the absence of fruitful economic activity, both current prosperity and future growth are in danger of destruction

All [state] activities depend first on the treasury. Therefore, a King shall devote his best attention to it

A King with depleted treasury eats into the vitality of the citizens and the country

Wealth will slip away from that childish man who constantly consults the stars. The only [guiding] star of wealth is itself; what can the stars do?

Just as it is impossible not to taste honey or poison that one may find at the tip of one's tongue, so it is impossible for one dealing with government funds not to taste, at least a little bit, of the King's wealth

It is the people who constitute a kingdom; like a barren cow, a kingdom without people yields nothing

Just as it is impossible to know when a fish moving in water is drinking it, so it is impossible to find out when government servants in charge of undertaking misappropriate money

Those officials who do not eat up the king's wealth, but increase it in just ways, and are loyally devoted to him shall be made permanent in service

He who causes loss of revenue eats the king's wealth, [but] he who produces double the [anticipated] revenue eats up the country and he who spends all the revenue [without bringing any profit] eats up the labor of the workmen

The source of finances of the State is mining [and metallurgical], industrial; the state exercises power with its treasury. With [increased] wealth and a [powerful] army, more territory can be acquired, thereby further increasing the wealth of the State

Any official who incurs the displeasure of the people shall either be removed from his post or transferred to a distant region

A king who observes his duty of protecting his people justly and according to law goes to heaven, one who does not protect them or inflicts unjust punishment will not

It is the power of the punishment alone, when exercised impartially in proportion to the guilt, irrespective whether the person punished is a king's son or enemy, that protects this world and the next

Judges shall discharge their duties objectively and impartially so that they may earn trust and affection of the people

A king shall have his agents in the courts of the enemy, the ally, the middle and the neutral kings to spy on the kings as well as their eighteen types of high officials

Miraculous results can be achieved by practicing the methods of subversion

A single assassin can achieve, with weapons, fire or poison more than a fully organized army

The welfare of state depends on an active foreign policy

The king who understands the interdependence of the six methods of foreign policy plays, as he pleases, with other rulers bound to him by the chains of his intellect

The Conqueror shall think of the circle of states as a wheel – himself at the hub and his allies, drawn to him by the spokes though separated by intervening territory, as its rim

The enemy, however, strong he maybe, becomes vulnerable to harassment and destruction, when he is squeezed between his conquerors and his allies

When the benefits accruing to kings under treaty, irrespective of their state as the weaker, equal or stronger king, is fair to each one, peace (by agreement) shall be the preferred course; if the benefits are to be distributed unfairly, war is preferable

Strength is power; happiness is the objective of using power. Power and success are interrelated. Power is of three kinds; so is the success resulting from its use. Intellectual strength provides the power of [good] counsel, prosperous treasury and a strong army provide physical power, and valor is the basis for [morale and] energetic action. The success resulting from each one is, correspondingly intellectual, physical and psychological

An archer letting off an arrow may or may not kill a single man, but a wise man using his intellect can kill even reaching unto the very womb

A King relies mainly on elephants (Center of Gravity) for achieving victory in battles. With their very large bodies, they are able to do things in war which are dangerous for other arms of the forces; they can be used to crush the enemy's foot soldiers, battle arrays, forts and encampments

Ruler

The ruler is the protector of the orphaned, refuge of the refugees, guide to the afflicted, protector of the frightened, the support of the unsteady, the friend, the relative, the master, the benefactor, the teacher, father, mother, brother to all

The ruler's duties are five: punishment of the wicked, rewarding the righteous, development of the state revenues by just means, impartiality in granting favors, and protection of the state

That ruler stays long in power, who acts like a skilled gardener: rehabilitating uprooted ones, watching the blooming ones, strengthening the weak, bending down the too tall ones, weakening the excessively strong ones, separating the clustered ones, trimming the thorny ones and protecting the ones that have come up by themselves

One should never ignore an enemy, knowing him to be weak, he becomes dangerous in due course, like the spark of fire in a haystack

One should not trust a bad friend or even a good friend. Sometimes, an angered friend discloses all secrets

What is not possible by deployment of force is possible by the use of stratagem. The black cobra was defeated by the stratagem of the crow and the golden chain

The enemy should be destroyed by all means at all times; whether by conciliation, concession, dissension or invasion

The enemy should be carried on one's shoulder so long as the times are adverse, but should be attacked at the proper time, as the earthen pot by a stone

The enemy should not know one's weakness, but one should know enemy's weakness. One should hide one's intention, as the tortoise with draws its limbs, and watch the enemy's posture

Only those who have objectives enter into alliances. There can be no alliance with people who are satisfied and have no desires. Therefore, all tasks should be kept unfinished (for satisfying allies)

Alliances should not be concluded for money or position. When these are lost, the alliance fails

The cardinal principle of the ruler's ministers is: cheerfulness at all times, sweetness of speech and firmness of decision

The minister should be able to suggest strategy in enemy's affairs, take quick action in own affairs, exhibit happiness in friend's achievements and boldness in state affairs

Between a serpent and an evil man, the serpent is preferable. The serpent bites occasionally, but the evil man at every step

The ruler's envoy (ambassador) is one who is competent, intelligent, eloquent, capable of knowing other's minds, brave, and speaks aptly

Exercise of power and achievements of results should be properly matched by the ruler in order to win over the people

Many rulers have been destroyed by being under the control of the group of six enemies (lust, anger, greed, conceit, arrogance, foolhardiness)

A mad elephant, mounted by an intoxicated mahout tramples on everything that it comes across. Likewise is a ruler devoid of the light of learning, advised by an unwise minister

A ruler who performs his duty righteously and protects his people goes to heaven. Quite contrary is the case with one who does not protect or metes out unjust punishment

A ruler who administers justice on the basis of four principles; righteousness, evidence, history of the case, and the prevalent law shall conquer the four corners of the earth

An ally with increased power is untrustworthy, for prosperity changes the mind

Difficulties stabilize friendships

Rendering help is the sign of a friend

As a bird is captured by bait, enemies should be destroyed by creating trust and offering bait

One should not allow enemies posing as friends to grow in strength at one's expense

A fight between equals is, like the collision of one unbaked earthen pot with another which destroys both

In a fight with an inferior, one attains absolute victory, like a stone hitting an earthen pot

Power is the cause for the forging of treaties. Unheated metal does not coalesce with metal

The force of an army which returns to fight, after defeat without any desire to live, is dangerous. Therefore, defeated army should not be harassed

During daytime the crow kills the owl. At night, the owl kills the crow (the time of fight is important)

One should sign a treaty of peace with one's equal and superior, and fight with the inferior

Fighting a superior is like an infantry soldier fighting an elephant

A weak ruler surrendering, lives without hope in life like the crab on the river bank (always in danger of being captured). One who fights with a small army perishes like the one who tries to cross the sea without a boat. Therefore, he should seek refuge with powerful ruler or remain in an impregnable fort

From (the strength of) the treasury, the army is born

Through the treasury and the army, the territory, whose adornment is the treasury, is obtained

Even after winning (a battle), a ruler with a weak army and a depleted treasury is a loser

In inactivity, there is certain destruction (sure loss) of what has been achieved and of what is to come. By activity, objectives are achieved and abundance of wealth acquired

A state with depleted resources, even if acquired, becomes only a liability

Just as only ripe fruits are collected from a garden, the fruits of the state (revenue) should be collected when due. Collection of unripe fruits (premature collection of revenue) should be avoided as this will generate the wrath of the people and result in self-destruction

What is right is based on truth, evidence on witnesses, custom on available tradition of the people, and the law

He who punishes severely is hated by the people, he who punishes mildly is despised, and one who metes out just punishment is respected

If no punishment is given the law of the fishes (strong swallowing the weak) is created

Punishment, the root of discipline, is the source of prosperity of the people

Rulers armed with the staff of punishment resolve the miseries of the people and enhance their security and welfare

When guilt is removed there are no guilty men

When guilty men are removed, the guilt will again contaminate others

Judges should be impartial, trustworthy, and liked by the people

Persons standing out on account of their learning, intellect, valor, noble lineage and good deeds are venerated

Time (opportunity) approaches a man desirous of it only once. And will not approach a second time as per his wish

Success and failure are common on all paths

Power alters the mind

Even in matters of excessive valor, the wise one achieves over the brave one, as the hunter does over the elephant

The arrow shot by an archer may or may not kill a single person. But stratagem devised by a wise man can kill even babies in the womb

Like forest fire, the power born out of sorrow and resentment bestows bravery

No one should be disrespected. The opinion of all shall be heard. The wise one should utilize even a child's sensible words

There is no man without desire

Fire lurks in the wood

Power, place, and time assist in achievement of objectives

Righteousness is the root of happiness

Humility is the root of control of senses

The fury of the people is the greatest of furies

Counsel is a beacon to the one unclear of action

Counselors (ministers) see the true implications of what ought to be done, and what not to be done

Politics is the tool of state policy

Internal administration and foreign relations are dependent upon state Policy

Neighboring states are the source of treaties and hostilities

Power is the cause of an alliance

An unbaked earthen pot on colliding with another unbaked earthen pot gets destroyed (equals should not fight)

Sting of words is stronger than the burning of fire

An enemy should be won over by the use of strategy

Fire has no weakness

Work is the root of wealth

Expedience is an aid to those who seek success

Fortune is achieved by human effort

Flawless jobs are rare

One who knows the (opportune) time accomplishes the task

Due to lapse of time, time itself consumes the fruit

The one who knows the means make the impossible possible

Man-made obstacles should be overcome through one's skill

When things get difficult, the childish describe the handicaps
Those who blindly believe in destiny do not achieve anything
Danger should be overcome through proper analysis
The one who knows the cows' nature gets the milk
A weak (ruler), even if learned, is not respected by people
He who speaks of others faults in an assembly proclaims his own shortcomings
One who cannot control himself is destroyed by his anger
Doubtful ruin is better than definite ruin
Donation is righteousness
That which does not increase virtue and wealth is lust
A single vice (defect) overshadows many virtues (qualities)
The bounds of good conduct should not be crossed
The lion, even if hungry does not graze grass
Meaningful words, even if spoken by a child, should be listened to
That which will not be believed, even if it is truth, should not be spoken
Many qualities should not be overlooked because of a minor shortcoming
Excessive courtesy should not be trusted
Through the association of the good, even one without virtue becomes virtuous
Water mixed with milk becomes milk
Even a lump of mud can produce fragrance (of a flower)
Valor is the wealth of rulers
Till the enemy's weakness is known, he should be kept on friendly terms
An enemy should be struck at his weak point
One's weakness should not be revealed
The evil one harms, even if treated well
The forest fire burns even trees like sandalwood
Do not associate with people of ill repute
Even milk in the hands of a drunkard acquires disrepute
Greed clouds the intellect

Secret tasks should be scrutinized by oneself

The daring acts of the foolish should be controlled

Feeding a snake with milk increases its venom, no nectar is produced

Fear of a bad reputation is the greatest fear

In familiarity, flaws do not remain hidden

A pigeon today is better than a peacock tomorrow

One should not argue with the intelligent, the foolish, friends, teachers, and the beloved

Modesty is the ornament of women

Knowledge is the ornament of the learned

Righteousness is the ornament of all

Learning, accompanied by humility, is the ornament of ornaments

Children should be made to reach the shores of knowledge (provided maximum education)

Prosperity depends on the intellect

Truth leads one to heaven

Sweet words, if inapt, should not be spoken

Even the brightest firefly is not fire

Mere growth cannot create quality

Like seed, the fruit

Intellect depends on education

One's actions are the cause of one's sorrow

What is the use of an elephant for one in need of milk?

The ocean cannot quench thirst

Develop character and self control, be ceaselessly active, be fearless and endlessly strive to attain your objective

Even the fangless serpent should raise its hood, for with or without poison, a raised hood is frightening

The mirage looks like water. An enemy can look like a friend

In the fight between the dog and the pig, the ultimate victory is that of the pariah (who gets the meat to eat)

A dog on land drags the crocodile. A crocodile in water drags the dog. The place of fight is important

Discipline and success in learning depend on control over the senses

The value of land is what man makes of it

Unheated metal does not coalesce with metal. Power is the cause of an alliance

Sandalwood does not give up its fragrance even if broken; sugarcane does not give up its sweetness even when thrown into the crushing machine. The great people do not give up their good qualities even when they are weakened

As a fisherman catches fish from water, utilizable resources should be captured

Statesmanship

If war involves both parties in common ruin that is the bankruptcy of statesmanship. War must be conducted by armed forces, but much more important than the force of arms, is the high strategy which saps the enemy's morale and disrupts his forces, and brings about his collapse or takes him to the verge of collapse before armed attack.

Unscrupulous and rigid as Chanakya was in the pursuit of his aim, he never forgot that it was better to win over an intelligent and high-minded enemy than to crush him. His final victory was obtained by sowing in the enemy's ranks and in the very moment of his victory, so the story goes, he induced Chandragupta to be generous to his rival chief. Chanakya himself is said to have handed over the insignia of his own high office to the Minister of that rival whose intelligence and loyalty to his old chief had impressed him deeply. So the story ends not in the bitterness of defeat and humiliation, but in reconciliation and in laying the firm and enduring foundations of a state, which had not only defeated but had won over its chief enemy²⁷

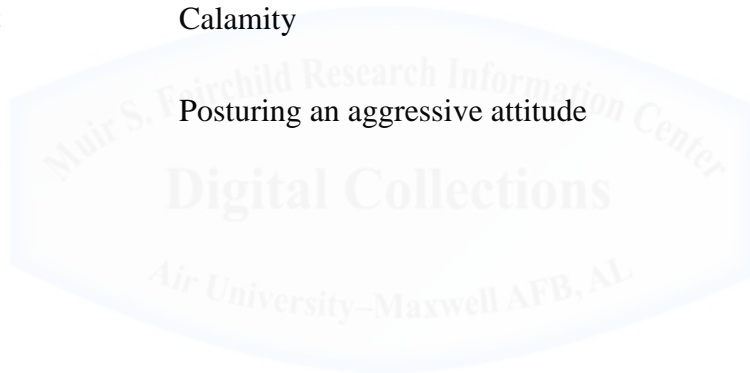
²⁷ The maxims have been extracted from the Arthashastra and the translations by Dr RP Kangle, LN Rangarajan and VK Subramanian.

Glossary of Terms

<i>Adhikaranas</i>	Books
<i>Alabda Labharthah</i>	The preservation of what has been acquired
<i>Amatya</i>	The ministers
<i>Ari</i>	The hostile (state)
<i>Artha</i>	Sustenance or livelihood or wealth or well being
<i>Asana</i>	Policy of remaining neutral
<i>Asuravijayan</i>	One who makes conquests like a demon (evil)
<i>Avapa</i>	Relation with the neighboring states
<i>Bala</i>	The forces
<i>Beda</i>	Divide
<i>Dana</i>	Gifts
<i>Danda</i>	Punishment
<i>Dharmavijayan</i>	One who makes conquests for the sake of glory
<i>Durga</i>	The fort
<i>Dvaidhibhava</i>	Dual policy
<i>Gunas</i>	Policies
<i>Gunas</i>	Measures
<i>Janapada</i>	The territory of the state with the population

<i>Kama</i>	Social needs
<i>Kosha</i>	Treasury
<i>Labdh Parirakshana</i>	The augmentation of what has so been preserved
<i>Labdhaprasamana</i>	Pacification of what is conquered
<i>Lobhavijayan</i>	One who makes conquests out of greed
<i>Madhyama</i>	Middle (state)
<i>Mandala</i>	Circle
<i>Mantrashakti</i>	The power of counsel and diplomacy
<i>Mitra</i>	The ally
<i>Prabhavashakti</i>	The power of the army and the treasury
<i>Prakritis</i>	Constituents of the state
<i>Purohitas</i>	Spiritual and political leaders
<i>Rajamandala</i>	The Circle of kings
<i>Rakshita Vivardhini</i>	The distribution among the deserved what has been so augmented
<i>Sadgunya</i>	The six measures
<i>Saman</i>	Counsel
<i>Samidhi</i>	The policy of peace
<i>Samsraya</i>	The policy of seeking shelter
<i>Shakti</i>	Power
<i>Shastra</i>	Science

<i>Sitadhyaksa</i>	Superintendent
<i>Swami</i>	Ruler or Leader
<i>Tantra</i>	Internal administration of the state
<i>Udasina</i>	Indifferent or neutral (state)
<i>Upaya</i>	Solution
<i>Utsahashakti</i>	The energy and drive (of the ruler)
<i>Vigraha</i>	Conflict
<i>Vijigishu</i>	The conqueror
<i>Vyasana</i>	Calamity
<i>Yana</i>	Posturing an aggressive attitude



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